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GLEAMS FROM PAUL'S PRISON

WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.

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GLEAMS FROM

PAUL'S PRISON;

OR,

STUDIES FOR THE DAILY LIFE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

BY

WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.,

Author of "Hints and Helps for the Christian Life," and "Present Lessons from Distant Days."

70-1748

PHILADELPHIA:
THE GRIFFITH AND ROWLAND PRESS,
1420 Chestnut Street.

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SANTA CLARITA, CA 91321

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Published June, 1903

A COMMON trouble with us is a too fragmentary use of Scripture. But that which was a whole in the Author's mind ought to be conceived of as a whole also in that of the reader's. And the raying out of an entire Gospel or Epistle upon Life and Duty has long been wonderful to me. This book is an attempt to read one of the sweetest and most stimulating of the Epistles of the great Apostle *through*, and to disclose its multiform relation with the Daily Life.

WAYLAND HOYT.

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CHAPTER I.

BEGINNINGS.

THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD is not for this man or for that one only—it is for men; it is not for this favored place or that alone—it is for the world; it is not sectional, it is catholic.

This is strikingly and typically illustrated in Paul's visit to the city of Philippi.

The apostle on his second missionary tour had been evangelizing variously in Galatia—a portion of Asia Minor. It was his purpose to go from thence into Asia—not what we understand by the continent of that name, but a great territorial province of the Roman Empire, lying on the borders of the Ægean Sea.

But the apostle is strangely hindered. He can not find the light. The Scripture tells us he was forbidden of the Holy Spirit

to preach the Word just then in Asia.* He is in a good deal of perplexity. He stands where we all must every now and then—at the meeting of two ways, ready to take this or that, as either shall be God's way, but quite unable to see just now on which the sunshine of the Divine Will falls.

Doubtful places are always difficult places. It brings the great apostle very near us, I am sure, to discover that even he did not always stand in the clear radiance, that his feet got tangled in perplexities, that he even had to wait sometimes for the Divine sunrise.

The only thing to do when you find yourself in such a place is what the apostle did —to wait. It is hard work, this waiting, but it is the best work one can put himself at then. Paul tried a little as to whether this might be the right course or that. After they were come to Mysia they essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not; and they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.† Paul tried a little as

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* Acts xvi. 6.

† Acts xvi. 7, 8.

to whether this might be the right course or that. But all the time, he held his attempt under the Divine disclosure, waiting to see whether it would break upon him here or there.

So we, in our difficult places of doubting are to try in this quarter or that to see whether this or that may be God's will for us; but we are not to commit ourselves irrevocably while we are in doubt. We are to hold ourselves back and mainly give ourselves to waiting; at least, until we have reached a measurable certainty that God has said *this* is the way, walk ye in *it*.

And the light shone at last for Paul. Be you sure it will for you also if you hold yourself in a sweet readiness to do God's will as soon as it shall be made known. That is a very wide promise and unfailing —if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.*

Waiting there in Troas a vision was vouchsafed to Paul. In the silence and the darkness of the night there seemed to stand be-

* John vii. 17.

side him a man of Macedonia—the European country on the other side that Ægean Sea, whose waves were laving the shores of Troas—and the vision prayed him saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.*

Here was the Divine direction for which Paul had been waiting. He does not hesitate. *Immediately*, the record says, we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.†

And so, soon, Paul finds himself in this Philippi, which is the chief city of this European Macedonia, ready for such duty as the Lord may there appoint him.

When, into a right readiness to do God's will and a submissive attempt to find it out, and earnest prayer—when into such mood the light of the Divine direction seems to fall; when you seem to yourself, perhaps you can hardly tell why, inclining to do this thing rather than the other, when this way appears to be opening while that one looks

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* Acts xvi. 9. † Acts xvi. 10.

as though it were closing up, then *follow the light fearlessly*, then be prompt and brave, then go forward. As sure as you can be of anything you may be sure that is God's way for you.

And then, if, when you get over into your Philippi, things do not turn out precisely as you thought they would, precisely as you think they ought; when you find, as Paul did in his Philippi, even mobs and hinderances and imprisonments—then do not go back upon yourselves, and subject yourselves to all the strain and worry of regret, and vainly wish you were where you never can be again, back there at the deciding place—but rather, believe you chose God's will and did verily take the best course because the right one, and so have heart and hope to sing God's praises amid your midnights and your prisons, as Paul could and Paul did.

This Philippi was an European city. "Philippi itself was a sort of little Rome; it was peopled by Romans, its citizens spoke the Roman tongue, and prided themselves on

Roman manners and customs," we are told. And so the very fact that Paul was directed there showed him that the Gospel he was to preach was not a sectional one, was not a Gospel which had only to do with Oriental people, but was one also for people of another stock and habit and culture. This Gospel was the power of God not to Jews alone, nor to Gentiles alone who had come into contact with Jews and had absorbed something of their ideas, it was the power of God for all sorts of people and for all sorts of places.

This visit of Paul to Philippi was the beginning of EUROPEAN EVANGELIZATION. His mission here was illustrative of the catholic character of the Gospel he was sent to preach.

Philippi was already renowned in history as the scene of that pivotal battle where, after the death of the great Julius Cæsar, Octavius, who was afterward Augustus Cæsar, grasped as Roman Emperor, the scepter of the world, he having defeated, here at Philippi, Brutus and Cassius.

It was to be henceforth more renowned in history as the place where the humble apostle, with no armor on his breast, nor with any armies beneath his hand, was to begin the contest for the supremacy of Christ in Europe, with weapons which though not carnal, were yet mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

So here in this Philippi, which was the gateway for this universal Gospel into Europe, Paul began to gather a church of the Lord Jesus.

Lydia, the seller of purple, you will remember, was the first convert. She was of the city of Thyatira—one of those very cities in that Asia where Paul had been forbidden to preach. She had passed over to Philippi, which furnished a good market for her wares, that she might ply her business.

This Lydia is one among many instances in the Scripture of the way in which the Lord comes to people with fresh blessing and disclosure *along the line of the daily*

duty. It is a very common heresy that one must retire from the daily business and duty that one may get on well in religion. It is a thought far too usual that the religious life is a life *aside from* the dusty daily paths of a secular occupation, and not a life for them and in them. We are not Romanists, but the Romish notion of a monastery or nunnery—of a life separated from rather than interpenetrating with pure, sweet impulse the store, the street, the home—is a notion infecting too much our Protestantism. But nothing can be farther from the Scripture than such a thought for life. Christ came to Matthew when he was seated at his taxing place. Christ called Peter and Andrew while they were working at their fishing-nets. And the good news comes to Lydia while she is here in this strange city of Philippi, plying her trade of purple-selling. And, being converted, she was not converted from purple-selling; she was converted into purple-selling with a new and grander motive, that she might now dye her goods thoroughly and sell them honest-

ly for the glory of the Lord. You do not need to retire from business in order to be a better Christian. What you need in order to be a better Christian is to put more of Christ into your business.

You remember the circumstances of her conversion. There were so few Jews in this European city of Philippi they could not support a synagogue. They had only a little, cheap, flimsy structure by the river-side, not dignified by the title synagogue, called only a praying-place. Lydia was a proselyte who met with the few Jews at this praying-place to worship the true God. Thither on the Sabbath Paul and his companions went, and, meeting but a few women only, began to tell of the crucified and risen Christ. And as they talked the Lord opened the heart of Lydia. She became a Christian. *And the first stone of the great Temple of a Christianized Europe was laid.*

If your Sunday-school class is small and its outlook does not seem promising, do not grow discouraged, and give up, and refuse

to teach it. You can not tell what may come out of the small chance even, you think you have. A Christianized Europe, the bringing of Christianity into contact with the ruling races of the world, began there in that meagre service, in that poor praying-place, by that river-side in Philippi. A deacon was speaking to a visitor about his pastor's want of success—perhaps he had often nagged the pastor about it, too, it would give him such heart for his duty. "Well," said the visitor, "what is the proof?" "Proof? Why, last year only one person joined the church." "Sir, who was that one?" "I don't know." "You must know, what was his name?" He looks into the church book, and finds that the only one added to the church that year is "Robert Moffatt." Well, but that pastor, in adding Robert Moffat to the church, added generations to the church, added a heroic missionary to the church and all his glorious work, added a Christianized South Africa to the church, added a fit and helpful wife for David Livingstone to the

church, for Mrs. Livingstone was Dr. Moffat's daughter. You can not tell what you may be doing when you do even what seems a little work for God. Lydia was the seed out of which a Christianized Europe sprang, and out of that a Christianized America. So do not be discouraged, toiling one; toil on. You are building better than you know. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Well, as soon as Lydia became Christian, and her household with her, and had confessed their faith in Christ in baptism, the fruits of Christianity began immediately to appear. That is a poor Christianity, even a sham one, in which some Christian fruitage does not make itself manifest. In her case a beautiful Christian hospitality thrust forth its clusters. "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord," said Lydia to Paul and his companions, "come into my house

* Ps. cxxvi. 6.

and abide there," and she constrained them.* So the little church in Philippi got a rooting place and a meeting-place.

For a good while the work went quietly and swiftly on, and other converts were multiplied.

Then, you will remember Paul wrought cure upon a poor demon-possessed slave-girl, whose ravings, taken for soothsayings among the superstitious populace, brought much gain for her masters. The fact that their property was spoiled thus, albeit now a soul was disenthralled, fired their anger. The masters stir up a mob against Paul and Silas. Without inquiry, and permitting them no word for their defence, the Roman officials give the order—*Summovete, lictors, despoliate, verberate* — remove them, lictors, strip them, scourge them.

The terrific punishment is inflicted. Forty times save one the thongs cut into their bared backs.

Then they are thrust into the inner prison,

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* Acts xvi. 15.

and their feet are made fast in stocks. But their souls are free. Prayers can not be fettered, neither songs of praise; and these mount heavenward from the prison glooms.

Then there is the earthquake. And soon their jailor and his household are baptized converts. And the magistrates, hearing that they have unwittingly beaten Roman citizens, release the prisoners with honor.

And they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.*

And so the church at Philippi has become permanently established.

Ten years now have sped away, and Paul is a prisoner at Rome for the first time.

Through all these years this church at Philippi has been steadily growing, and grandly keeping the faith.

It has been also distinguished by a singular and sincere affection for the apostle. Twice when he was in Thessalonica, and

* Acts xvi. 40.

once when he was at Athens, they have sensitively remembered his necessities. Now, a prisoner at Rome awaiting his trial, but living in his own hired apartments, he is again in need. Perhaps he must have money for his house rent; for, chained as he is now all the time to a Roman soldier, his wrist manacled to the wrist of his constant keeper, he is hindered from plying his trade of tent making, by means of which, before, so many times he has himself ministered to his own wants. And now again for the fourth time, this loving Philippian church is mindful of him. They send to him one of their number, Epaphroditus, bidding him carry to their beloved apostle a liberal supply of means.

And *this Epistle to the Philippians*, so full of a thankful joy and an outbursting love, and the serenity of a quiet heart, Paul writes to be taken back to this loving church by this same Epaphroditus, in recognition of their sweet mindfulness. It was written from Rome to these Philippians at the end of the year 62 or at the beginning of the

year 63 after Christ, as nearly all critics now agree.

Here is its loving *Salutation* and *Introduction:*

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." *

* Philippians i. 1–11, new version.

So much for the beginnings of both church and epistle. It is from such side lights of origin and purpose that we always gain deeper and clearer knowledge of any writing.

In the briefest way gather now some of the practical truths this Salutation and Introduction hold.

The noblest title for a man. Learn what that is. Paul and Timotheus, the *servants* of Jesus Christ. That is the noblest title for a man—the servant of Jesus Christ! Not alone in this epistle, but in nearly all his others, Paul thus announces himself; and that word servant is in the original a very tremendous one. It does not mean a hired servant; it means an enthralled servant, a bond servant. Than this, I claim, no higher honor or title, says the apostle, than that I be an enthralled one to Jesus Christ. And can there be for us a nobler title? To some one or to some what our hearts and lives must be enthralled. To some main purpose must we give ourselves. After

some ideal must we go chasing. It is the ideal which rules the life. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. What nobler thought for life possible than the yielding of all our hopes and plans, our lives and energies into glad slavery to Jesus Christ.

Who Christians are. Again, learn that. To all the *saints* in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi. Christians are *saints;* that is to say, they are separated, dedicated, devoted people—that is the meaning of the word. He is a saint, and so a Christian, who is preponderatingly devoted to God, the balance of whose life dips in the main and on the whole Godward. It does not follow, as some wild people in our day seem to imagine, that to be a dedicated, devoted, and so saintly person, is to be a perfect one. As we shall come to see, these Philippian saints were by no means perfect, good as Paul thought them. Here is a young apprentice bound out to learn a trade; he is dedicated to that trade; but it does not follow that he has become a perfect workman. He is only devoted to becoming a perfect

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workman. Here is a young man who has given himself to art. He is devoted to it. Toward art, in the scriptural sense, he is a saint. It does not follow that he is at once a Raphael or a Michael Angelo. He is only devoted to becoming the utmost artist that he can. So a Christian is a saint because he is devoted to Christlikeness, but he is not yet Christlike. Let us glory in sainthood, in devotement to such ideal. Let us be devoted to such ideal—that is the meaning of our sainthood. But let us not degrade that magnificent ideal by imagining that yet in our poor lives we have given it perfect illustration.

The simplicity of the organization of the early church. Again, learn that. With its *bishops* and *deacons.* No hierarchical prelacy here. No three orders of the ministry—bishops, priests, and deacons. But simply these—bishops or presbyters or elders, and deacons. Episcopacy is not scriptural; as all the best church historians admit, it is post-scriptural.

The privilege of the Christian. Again, learn that. *Grace* be unto you and *peace.*

Grace is the Divine favor manifested in Jesus Christ; peace is the fruit and issue of that Divine favor in the heart. This is your privilege and mine, if we are Christians—to be sure of God's favor and so to have quiet, joyful hearts.

> "Why should the children of a king
> Go mourning all their days?"

A constant habit of prayer for others. Again, learn that. Imprisoned at Rome, Paul could not bless these Philippians with the ministry of presence and of personal speech, but he could bless them with the ministry of prayer. That was a ministry of the utmost value. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The great apostle esteemed this ministry as of the highest worth. Read through his epistles, and it is even startling to notice how constantly he gave himself to prayer for others, and how earnestly he besought others' prayers for himself. You may seem to yourself much hindered in your attempts at doing good. You may even seem to be like

Paul, imprisoned from active service. But there is this controlling benignant ministry yet left you. The sick bed can not hinder that: a throng of secular duties need not. For your church, for your Lord's cause, for your friends you can still PRAY! How much are you using this grand ministry of prayer?

What is a minister's chief joy and help. Again, learn that. Making my prayer for you all with joy for *your fellowship* in regard to the Gospel from the first day until now. That word fellowship means co-operation. Oh, what a boon is that to any minister—a co-operating people; a people girded for duty, a people in their pews when he is in the pulpit; a people standing with him in the social service of the week-night prayer-meeting; a people transmuting his sermons into life, so making them winged as arrows are, and sending them flying to their target. Do you want to help your minister as Paul was helped by these Philippians? Your co-operation shall make him strong. Your refusal of such co-operation makes him

what Samson was when his locks were shorn.

I read once of a minister's dream. "I dreamed," he said, "that I was hitched to a carriage, attempting to draw it through the mud which covered the street in front of my house. How or why I had been assigned that position, I could not explain; but there I was, pulling with all my might, as if I had been the best carriage-horse in the town. I had reached a point not far from the church, when the mud seemed to get deeper and deeper, and the carriage to draw so heavily that I gasped for breath and almost sank down exhausted. This seemed the more inexplicable, when, looking back, I saw the entire congregation behind the carriage, apparently pushing it along. But the more I tried the harder it became, until finally I was forced to stop and examine the difficulty. I went to the rear, where I supposed was the congregation, but nobody could be found. I called, but no answer. I repeated the call, but still no reply. By-and-by a voice called out, 'Hallo!' and

looking up, whom should I see but one of the deacons looking complacently out of the window, and upon going to the door of the carriage, wha was my astonishment to behold the whole congregation quietly sitting inside!"

What can a minister do when everybody will ride and nobody will co-operatingly *pull?*

A glorious confidence. Again, learn this. Being confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you *will perfect it* up to the day of Jesus Christ. Here is the old doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. It is a doctrine stimulating, refreshing. When God takes a man in hand, He does not let him go. Beginning with him, He finishes with him, even up to the day of Jesus Christ. Yes, the block of marble is rude and rough, but there is in it the imprisoned angel. And the sculptor is loving and wise and patient, and in the day of Jesus Christ the perfect statue shall stand shiningly disclosed.

The Apostolic prayer for these Philippians.

Again, listen to that. In one word, it is a prayer for *increase.*

Increase of love—that your *love* may abound yet more and more. Increase of love unto knowledge—that your love may abound more and more in *knowledge;* in religion the way of advancing knowledge is more through the heart than through the head. "He liveth best who loveth best."

Increase into quickness and precision of knowing—that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all *discernment*—so that you may discriminate easily, swiftly, unerringly the good from the bad, the true from the false, approving the things that are excellent.

Increase in sincerity—that ye my be *sincere*—judged of in sunlight, not afraid to let the disclosing beams pierce your life through.

Increase in blameless, beautiful living—that ye may be *without offence* unto the day of Christ; your life so shining that it shall not be a surprise to anybody when they find your name written on the church roll.

Increase in fruitful righteousness—being

filled with the fruits of *righteousness*, which are through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God; this is the ultimate test always, the absence of which brands any man's professed Christianity a sham — righteousness, sweetness in the home, honesty in business, glad and ready service for the Lord.

As I write, the shadows of an old year gather and thicken, and the dawn of a new year hastens. "Give me a great thought that I may live upon it," cried the German poet. What greater, holier thought to live on for the year to come, for all the years to come, than such thoughts as meet us at the entrance of this epistle, of enthralled devotion to Jesus, and separated sainthood, and peaceful and gracious privilege, and benignant ministry of prayer, and co-operating service with your pastor, and glorious confidence that, being in God's hand, you shall not fall out of it, and prayerful, purposeful increase in all the inner energies and outward expressions of the life hid with Christ in God.

CHAPTER II.

BONDS IN CHRIST.

PAUL was now a prisoner at Rome. But this Roman imprisonment, itself lasting something like two years, was really the continuation of a captivity which had already for more than two years grasped him.

It is even startling to think how much of the great Apostle's time was passed in prison.

At his last visit to Jerusalem, you will remember, a mob had stormed around him in the Temple-courts. The Roman commandant of the Castle of Antonia, overlooking the Temple-courts, had swooped down upon the frantic mob and rescued the Apostle from its clutches. Notwithstanding, some of the fierce Jews had entered into oath that they would eat nothing until they had slain

Paul. For safety, and also for his trial, the Roman commander at Jerusalem had sent him by night into the custody of Felix, the Roman governor of the province, whose official residence was at Cæsarea. Felix had dillydallied about the case—hoping that Paul would proffer bribe. So two years had sped away. At last Porcius Festus had come to rule in the room of Felix. He, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, had determined on the delaying policy of his predecessor. As Roman citizen, Paul had one resource. He could appeal directly to the Emperor. He does appeal. To Rome, then, he must go to stand before the Emperor's judgment-seat. There follows now the journey Romeward, interrupted by the storm, and shipwreck, and tarrying through the three long months of winter on the island Malta. Then, at last, the Apostle arrives a prisoner at Rome.

But Nero can delay a trial as easily as his subordinates; more easily, for he must answer to no one, he is supreme. What cares the most infernal man who ever sat

upon a throne for the goings on of justice. He is busy with his lusts and with his theatre-playings and with his luxurious idleness.

And so, two years more, nearly, have probably sped away, the Apostle being still a prisoner up to and beyond the time when he writes this Epistle to the Philippians.

He was not as close a prisoner as he might have been indeed. He might have been—as he was afterward, in his second Roman imprisonment, just preceding his martyrdom—thrust down into some horrid dungeon like the Mammertine. But even a mitigated imprisonment was bad enough. He lived in his own hired lodgings, truly; but any blessing of solitude was constantly denied him. Day and night, and night and day, never for a moment absent, a Roman soldier must be with him, with his wrist chained to the wrist of Paul. It was no slight irritation to be manacled into such close companionship with a rough, rude soldier. How deeply Paul felt this annoyance may be seen, as Canon Farrar has re-

marked, from his allusions to "his bonds or his "coupling-chain" in every Epistle of the Captivity. Though his friends might visit him, he could get no breath of exercise or freedom in visiting them. A chained Jewish prisoner could not walk about with his guarding soldier.* It was a long, difficult, confining, hindering, harassing time. The Apostle's bonds in Christ were bonds yielding him the shortest tether.

Oh! when the world needed so much the work it had been given Paul to do; when there was such call for the widest proclamation of the Crucified; when the little struggling companies of the Christian churches, just rescued from the darkness, and with the torches of their faith buffeted on every hand by the fierce breezes of persecutions and heathenish temptations, needed so much the Apostolic visitations and instructions; when to his straining industry and bounding energy and flaming zeal confinement was so wearing and so choking; when

* Farrar's Life and Work of St. Paul, vol. 2, p. 398.

imprisonment was stealing so many of the best years of his enthusiastic and dedicated life—this Providence of such long-continued "Bonds" must have seemed, both to himself and to the scattered and feeble Christians, most strange and enigmatical.

And now, the Apostle held here in his "Bonds," caught and kept in singular and apparently even cruel Providences, is not a man at such wide remove from the men and women of the days in which we live. For, while there are not, indeed, for men and women now, the coupling-chains of a Roman durance, there are yet often in the experiences of to-day the bonds of many sadly tangling and most perplexing things. There are such things as the "iron fetters of the daily life," as the unyielding hindrances of poverty, as the wounding frettings of a burdensome domestic care, as a daily toil so tasking that a little strip of leisure is rare as a rose in winter, as menacing anxieties chasing the cheer from duty, as the imprisonments of sickness, as frosts of disappointments biting to their vitals all rare and

patient hopes. Some time since, I heard a letter read, the sore pathos of which has haunted me ever since. She was a New England girl. There was in her a sacred thirst for knowledge. Her early circumstances seemed as destitute of chance for learning as the rocks about the Israelites were of water. But her diligence had smitten the rocks and compelled the waters forth. She would know something. She would know what she learned so well that she could teach worthily. She was on the verge of victory. She stood where the highest opportunity opened for her in the noble profession she had chosen. Just then the poor eyes, tasked terribly for so many years, gave out. She might not read. She might not write. She must stay in a darkened room. How long? God knows whether she can ever see again to any purpose.

Still, then, are there Bonds in human life. The Apostle snared there for so long in that Roman coupling-chain is not at such wide distance from ourselves. He is but an illus-

tration of the fresh fact of a baffling and perplexing Providence.

But to have learned the deep meaning and high use of Bonds as the Apostle did, is to have learned one of the profoundest lessons which can be taught us in the school of life. Let us sit together at his feet that we may attempt a little to make his wisdom ours. It is thus the Apostle speaks to us of his Bonds :

"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel ; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places ; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife ; and some also of good will : the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds : but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached : and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. According to my earnest expectation

and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." *

Notice, first, *that his Bonds the Apostle declares to be bonds in Christ.* So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace. The Revised Version makes a change in the order here—so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorian guard. But in either order the thought is substantially the same—namely, that these bonds were somehow caught up and carried into the realm Christ Jesus.

If any man be in Christ he is a new creature—but even that is not the whole of it. If any man be *in Christ;*—have you ever waited to heed a little the lessons of an opening spring-time? I saw a man scattering seed into the soil. There lies the seed—a minute, hard, brown, unblooming capsule. But flung there it is *in* the soil and *in*

* Phil. i. 12, 20.

the sunlight, and the sun warmth searching for it down amid the earth which covers it, and *in* the moisture distilling from the dews and rains. And in all these things, and ministered to by them, the seed takes to itself a strange newness of rootlet and plumule, and stem, and stalk, and leaf, and fragrant, vivid flower, and burdening autumn fruitage.

So when a man comes by faith into such spiritual contact with Christ, that by no words can you tell the man's relation to Christ so precisely as to say that he is *in Him*, drawing sustenance from Him, ministered to by Him, fed by the spiritual forces which flow from Him—then the man enters into an immense and marvelous newness. More new is he than is the flower from the seed out of which it sprang, for the man does not develop from the old germ as does the flower, but from a new germ by the power of Christ implanted. The man is born again, born from above, a new creation. He possesses a new nature. He is new in principles of life, in perceptions, in

interests, in enjoyments, in hopes. His will is changed, his understanding is enlightened, his heart is won and warm for God. Then he was Saul persecuting Christ, now he is Paul preaching Christ. Then self was center, now Christ is center.

But not only is this newness in the man's self. It rays outward from himself, and hangs the glories of its change on all the outward things which touch him. Especially does it do this toward harassing, hindering affairs. There is imparted to them new meaning. Now, since the man himself is in Christ, these painful things of life are in Christ also. They are Christ's ministers, they lift into companionship with His sufferings; they fall not out of fate, but out of a love which broke its heart for men. They may bring ache, but they mean help. They are the burnings of the furnace that the gold may be refined. They are the chiselings of the sculptor that the statue may be disimprisoned. They are the beatings of the flail that the grain may be broken from its husk. And the consciousness of the love that is in

them takes the pang out of the pain. And the certainty that to the man in Christ all these painful things are likewise in the sphere and realm of Christ, enables one to rise even into the wonderful joy of this same Apostle, when he exclaims, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, if so be that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Bonds out of Christ *are* bitter; but bonds in Christ are bitter-sweet. And this is the privilege of the Christian, to be sure that deaths and disasters, blights and blisterings, bonds and burdens are all *in Christ.*

Here you are bound. You can not do as you would. You are fettered. Sickness catches you, or monotony wearies you, or death comes into your home and stops your hope. But all these things for you are in the circle of Christ, and not outside of Him. He knows their meaning and appoints their ministry. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous: yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even

the fruit of righteousness.* And that radiant "Afterward," he sees always, though, with your short sight, and with your vision blocked by tears, you indeed can not.

Follow, then, Paul's example here. It is of vital importance that you do it. It makes all the difference between a victorious life or a defeated one whether or not you do it. Look with Paul upon your "bonds," whatever they may be, as bonds in Christ. Bid them bind you into closer intimacy with Him. Refuse to let them bind you back from Him.

Paul and Silas, in that inner prison at Philippi, their backs bleeding from the scourge and their feet fastened in the stocks, saw to it, that when the jailer flung that iron door against them, he did not shut out from them Christ. Still were they *in* Christ —and those black walls, and those scourge wounds, and those stocks and chains were in Him, too. And so their hearts were full of praise and their lips were full of song.

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* Heb. xii. 11, Revised Version.

Bonds out of Christ are bitter ; but bonds in Christ are bitter-sweet.

Notice, second, *that these Bonds in Christ Paul came to discover to be not so much hindering as furthering ones.* "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel." And the furthering quality of these bonds, standing in our time, we may see even better than Paul could, standing in his.

They were furthering bonds because, *through their enforced leisure, they allowed the writing of many of the Epistles.*

Run over the list of the Epistles of the Captivity—the Epistle to Philemon ; the Epistle to the Colossians ; the Epistle to the Ephesians ; the Epistle to the Philippians : possibly, if Paul were its author, the Epistle to the Hebrews ; and in the second imprisonment the second Epistle to Timothy. Behold, then, how large a part of our New Testament we owe to these furthering bonds. Paul's spoken words, in his rapid

preachings here and there, sank into human hearts, indeed, but then were lost upon the vacant air. But now that Paul was bound from such wide preachings, he must write, and his written words have ministered to all the ages. The bonds of Paul were the wings of the Gospel. A parallel must occur to you. John Bunyan was bound for twelve long years in Bedford jail. But John Bunyan free and preaching, mighty as were his words, was weak compared with John Bunyan jailed and *writing* of the Pilgrim's journey to the Celestial City. By this he, being dead, yet speaketh. The Gospel's utmost triumph in John Bunyan's life was Bedford jail.

Also, these bonds were furthering ones because *they made themselves manifest as bonds in Christ in all the palace and to all others.*

The New Version says throughout the whole Prætorian guard, and the reference is to them. They were the selectest and most influential corps in the whole army. One by one they were detailed as Paul's custodians, to be chained with him for a

certain time. It is certain that to this auditor Paul would preach Jesus. That hearer *must* be present at the service. Nor did Paul preach without effect; for soon there began to be saints in Cæsar's household. And so Paul's bonds gave him entrance for Christ into influential quarters where, unbound, he had never gained admittance. And these saints in Cæsar's household preached Christ among their ranks. And so the leaven leavened. Also, I doubt not, Paul's carriage of himself in his bonds, in a way so strange, because so Christian, in a way so uncomplaining, submissive, yet joyful withal, so different, for instance, from the whining whimpering of a Seneca in his exile, drew attention, perhaps, even among the higher ranges of the adherents of the court, to this prisoner Paul, and so to the Christ who was ever on his lips as the center of his hope and the girder of his courage and the giver of his strength. And thus "to all the rest" the news of the Crucified was carried. And again Paul's bonds were the Gospel's wings.

Also, these Bonds in Christ were furthering instead of hindering because *Paul's grand example in his bonds infected with a noble contagion those Christians in Rome who were not bound.*

A true example, though of a sort the humblest can not stay confined. The steady duty of a bricklayer rescued to literature one of the most magnificent prose poems in any language. Thomas Carlyle had lent the second volume of his French Revolution, while it was still in manuscript, to a friend who desired the reading of it. Absorbed and entranced, this friend sat up perusing it, far into the small hours. The precious manuscript was left upon the table. At her wonted time, Betty, the housemaid, came to light the library fire in the morning. Needing something with which to start her fire, she spied the loose leaves on the table, and, thinking them but waste paper, and just adapted to her purpose, up the chimney went the inestimable manuscript in sad smoke. When the news was broken to Mr. Carlyle he was stunned utter-

ly. "I was as a man beside myself," he says. "I sat down and strove to collect my thoughts and to commence the work again. I filled page after page, but ran the pen over every line as the page was finished. Thus was it for many a weary day; until at length, as I sat by the window, half-hearted and dejected, my eye wandering over acres of roofs, I saw a man standing upon a scaffold engaged in building the wall of a house. With his trowel he'd lay a great splash of mortar upon the last layer, and then brick after brick would be deposited upon this, striking each with the butt of his trowel, as if to give it his benediction and farewell; and all the while singing or whistling as blithe as a lark. And in my spleen, I said within myself, 'Poor fool! how canst thou be so merry under such a bile-spotted atmosphere as this, and everything rushing into the regions of the inane? And then I bethought me, and I said to myself, 'Poor fool thou, rather, that sittest here by the window whining and complaining! What if thy house of cards falls? Is the universe wreck-

ed for that? The man yonder builds a house that shall be a home, perhaps, for generations. Men will be born in it, wedded in it, and buried from it; and the voice of weeping and of mirth shall be heard within its walls; and mayhap true valor, prudence and faith shall be nursed by its hearthstone. Man! symbol of eternity imprisoned into time! it is not thy works, which are all mortal, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the spirit thou workest in, which can have worth or continuance? Up, then, at thy work, and be cheerful!' So I arose and washed my face and felt that my head was anointed." And thus, through the unconscious example of a steady and cheerful duty-doing by a poor bricklayer, the great author mastered his disaster, and sang again the solemn songs of righteousness and sin and retribution sounding through his history of the French Revolution. Not the humblest example can stay confined, much less could Paul's example, though he were chained prisoner. His grand fearlessness, though he were im-

prisoned, opened the mouths of his unimprisoned but fearing brethren, and they became the more abundantly bold to speak the Word of God.

Also, these Bonds in Christ were furthering ones because *the very opposition which all this movement springing out of Paul's bonds excited, tended to a widening of a knowledge of the Crucified.* "Some, indeed, preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

There was a Jewish party in the church constantly dogging the steps of Paul, and opposed to his broad, free way of preaching Christ. They held to Christ, but they held also to the Mosaic Law. They were sticklers for the traditions of the fathers, and thought that, somehow, the righteousness

by Christ must be pieced out and completed by a righteousness won from slavish observance of the Mosaic Ritual. Such strong evangelizing influences pushing out from Paul in bonds, stirred them into the more vehement preaching of their partial gospel. But, to a degree, what they preached was Gospel, and in Paul's thought some Christ was always better than none at all. Thus, though it was out of hostility to the Apostle that they preached, to some extent they opened vision of the Saving Christ; and since at least a glance of Christ shone through what they said, in this other furthering aspect of his bonds Paul did rejoice, yea, and he would rejoice.

Thus it was, then, that instead of hampering, these bonds were really helping.

And as for Paul, so too, for you and me. All things work together for good to them that love God. O, baffled, buffeted one, learn this great lesson from Paul's bonds for help in yours. Let quaint old Matthew Henry speak a moment: "God led the Israelites to and fro, forward and backward,

as in a maze or labyrinth ; yet they were all the while under the direction of the pillar of cloud. He led them about, and yet He led them by a right way. His way in bringing His people home is always the best, though it may not be the nearest."

Notice, third, *Paul's purpose in his Bonds.*

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed ; but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

This, then, was the Apostle's purpose, that Christ be magnified. Bonds were not pleasant. Now, no chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous. But there was this pleasantness and beauty even about such bonds, that, whether they issued in release and life or in speedy death, they did afford grand chance of magnifying Christ, by showing how, in bonds if need be, or in death if need be, a Christian man could endure or die.

And so precisely for you and me, there is no bond of ours, be it this or that, be it irritating as Paul's coupling-chain or of far less account, which is not welcoming and wealthy with the same signal opportunity. Anyway this is left you, however hampered you may be, from this service no bond can bind you back — the magnifying Christ by showing forth the sufficient grace of Christ in bonds. I met a snatch concerning her lately mistress of the White House, and with whose great and awful sorrow the world struck tender and sympathizing chime. Back in her earlier life she had evidently seemed to herself to be badly bound. There had been trouble and hindrance and constant condemnation to a petty domestic care. Amidst it all she wrote this letter to her husband, crowned now amid the earth's stateliest heroes. I have never read anything fuller of the true and Christian philosophy of life. "I am glad," she says, "to tell that, out of all the toil and disappointment of the summer just ended, I have risen up to a victory; that

the silence of thought since you have been away has won for my spirit a triumph. I read something like this the other day: 'There is no healthy thought without labor, and thought makes the laborer happy.' Perhaps this is the way I have been able to climb up higher. It came to me one morning when I was making bread. I said to myself: 'Here I am, compelled by an inevitable necessity to make our bread this summer. Why not consider it a pleasant occupation, and make it so by trying to see what perfect bread I can make?' It seemed like an inspiration, and the whole of life grew brighter. The very sunshine seemed flowing down through my spirit into the white loaves, and now I believe my table is furnished with better bread than ever before." Express what is here implied but unexpressed. Let that thought which shall make the hindered laborer happy be for Christ's sake, the magnifying of Him. Be sure that Christ has put you where you are, even bound about as you may be, that you may magnify Him, and even into your imprisoned soul

there shall come a radiance, which, flowing out, shall hang with glorious color all the difficult duty and all the dreary walls. Even as dear George Herbert sings in that sweet poem he has named "The Elixir":

"Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee.

"All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean,
But with this tincture—*for Thy sake*—
Will not grow bright and clean.

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

"This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold:
For that which God doth touch and own
Can not for less be told."

Notice, fourth, *what was Paul's dependence that he might be the man he ought amid his bonds.* 'For I know that this shall turn to my

salvation through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." The *prayer* of these Phllippians and the *largess of the Divine Spirit*, it was upon these Paul hung. Their *prayers*—how much he valued prayer in his behalf, this great, victorious Apostle. How benignant may be our ministry each toward each by prayer. The legend tells the truth :

" The monk was preaching : strong his earnest word,
From the abundance of his heart he spoke ;
And the flame spread,—in every soul that heard
Sorrow and love and good resolve awoke :
The poor lay brother, ignorant and old,
Thanked God that he had heard such words of gold.

" 'Still let the glory, Lord, be Thine alone'—
So prayed the monk, his heart absorbed in praise :
'Thine be the glory ; if my hands have sown,
The harvest ripened in Thy mercy's rays.
It was Thy blessing, Lord, that made my word
Bring light and love to every soul that heard.

" 'O Lord, I thank Thee that my feeble strength
Has been so blessed : that sinful hearts and cold
Were melted at my pleading—knew at length
How sweet Thy service and how safe Thy fold ;
While souls that loved Thee saw before them rise
Still holier heights of loving sacrifice.'

" So prayed the monk ; when suddenly he heard
An angel speaking thus : ' Know, O my son,
Thy words had all been vain ; but hearts were stirred
And saints were edified and sinners won
By his *the poor lay brother's humble aid,*
Who sat upon the pulpit stair and PRAYED.' "

The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—not in himself was even the Apostle strong enough. There must be yielded him the Holy Spirit. Only by His indwelling could he be made strong. But such bestowal of the Divine Spirit is never denied to the one seeking it. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."*

Close to present facts is this Apostolic experience of Bonds. To less degree or greater every life is hindered, hampered. Let us remember these things,—that though there are bonds, they may be bonds in Christ ; that though often they may seem thwarting, they are really furthering ; that

* Luke xi. 13.

never can bond be so narrow that it does not open wide door for the magnifying of Christ; that for the pressure and hurt of bonds there is the inner balm and vigor of the Divine Spirit; and, toward our brethren in the various imprisonments of life, let us not forget to use and wield the mighty ministry of Prayer.

CHAPTER III.

THE GAIN OF DEATH.

HELD here a prisoner at Rome, and with his case as yet untried and undecided, the Apostle could be by no means certain what might be the issue. He had strong hopes that the gates of his captivity would open toward release. But confronting, as he must, a man like Nero, or some enthralled creature of his as cruel and unscrupulous, whom Nero might delegate to adjudicate upon him, there was a darkening probability that the result might be martyrdom—which, indeed, the Apostle did meet at Nero's hand a few years afterward, as the conclusion of his second imprisonment at Rome.

Looking into a future lowering with such a likelihood, the Apostle says: "Well, if that is to be the upshot, let it be; martyrdom is coronation; *to die is gain.*"

Which amazing and triumphant word concerning death—of himself, of his own knowledge, as the result of his own thinking, it was impossible that the Apostle say.

It was impossible that any man so affirm.

For this truth of the gain of death was the sheer disclosure of that Christ of whose Gospel the Apostle was commissioned preacher, and for the sake of whom he was held in bonds.

As when that bold Portuguese mariner, who, fearlessly sailing round the southernmost extremity of Africa opening for his countrymen an avenue to India, transformed what men had hitherto called the Cape of Storms into the Cape of Good Hope, so death had been to men but disastrous and awful storm until Christ came to tell them it might be the pathway of a radiant hope.

Said Socrates, just before he drank the fatal hemlock: "The hour of departure has arrived and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live; which is better God only knows."

Wails an old Greek poem:

"Oh, race of mortal men,
How as a thing of naught
I count ye, though ye live;
For who is there of men
That more of blessing knows
Than just a little while
To seem to prosper well,
And, having seemed, to fall."

Sings the pleasure-loving Anacreon: "My temples are gray, and white my head; beautiful youth is gone. Not much remains of sweet life. Therefore, I often sigh, fearing Tartarus, dreadful abyss of Hades. Full of horror is the descent thither, and whoever has once gone down there never returns." *

Here is one of the recurring inscriptions on the ancient heathen tombs: "I was not, and became. I was, and am no more. This much is true, whoever says otherwise does not speak the truth, for I shall not be!" †

Or this, again: "We all whom Death has laid low, are decaying bones and ashes, nothing else!" ‡

* Ulhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," p. 74.

† Ditto, p. 75. ‡ Ditto.

Or this, again: "eat, drink, make merry, come!"*

Or this, on a gravestone of a veteran of the Fifth Legion: "So long as I lived, I gladly drank; drink, ye who live!"†

To that ancient, dim, and struggling thought, upon which the Day Spring from on High had not yet risen, death, so far from being gain, was turned from with affright as utter loss; the only gain possible was this present life, poor and pitiable as it was. To keep the dead in some sort of connection with this present life was the passionate longing and attempt. Were you to go out from Rome to-day, along the straight and wonderful Appian Way, you would see it, on both sides, lined with the crumbling tombs of those ancient dead. Where you would think residences were most natural, you would find sepulchres. That Appian road was the path of constant travel for the multitudes bound on business or pleasure thronging in and out of the imperial city. And they buried their dead beside

* Ulhorn, p. 74. † Ditto.

that way for the jostling crowds, because they wanted, in some dim, helpless fashion, to keep those who had vanished out of life still in some shadowy marriage with it.

This is written on one of these bordering tombs: "Titus Tollius Musculus is laid here by the wayside that those who go by may say: 'Hail, Titus Tollius!'"*

This poor and fleeting life was all the gain these, upon whose vision the Divine Sunrise had not yet fallen, knew or could know. And if, gazing into death's blackness, any one dared to write, asTacitus does of the departed and noble Agricola—"If there is a place for the spirits of the pious, if, as the wise suppose, great souls do not become extinct with their bodies"†—why, then, no man could write or think of the certain change and mastery of death, except as confronted by that desolate and torturing "If." That "If"—it stood there at the gates of death, a taunting spectre which would not down.

* Ulhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," p. 67.

† Ditto, p. 76.

Contrast with all this black despair, or, at best but wavering hope, the magnificent and tremorless certainty of the Apostle—To die is gain.

Well, there is a man much vaunted in these days of ours, and who also most loftily vaunts himself; he has a most magnetic personality; he is gifted with marvelous powers of popular speech; he has dedicated himself chiefly to the most sneering traducing of Christ's Gospel. The sad thing about it is the crowds so follow him and applaud his words, even when, with ruthless hand, he attempts to strike down the stars of our holiest hopes. But test him by the awful fact of death, and, though to many thoughtless people he appears to know so much, here he will fail you. Here he will tell you, to use one of his own phrases, that he is "dead sure" of nothing. The coffin of his own brother staggers his certainty. The only word with which he can even attempt to light up that darkness is a perhaps. *Perhaps* mind is but a finer form of matter,

and when the material body is smitten down the whole man crumbles with it, *perhaps* the longing of love may find fulfillment, and there may be the blossoming of a brighter life But the "If" which tormented the ancient philosopher whom Revelation, as yet, had never blessed, is the only tombstone which he, discarding a now yielded Revelation, can read at the grave of his dead brother.

Young man, ask yourself thoughtfully and honestly, which would you rather have the truer, which is best for man, which is better burdened with blessing for him—an infidelity which, with all its boasting, has not gone, and can not go, beyond that ancient, tantalizing "If," or this Good News of the gracious Christ which enabled Paul in his chains to say, which grants to all men this same boon—if at the hands of the Crucified they will but accept it—the boon of this ability to declare, with an unquivering certainty, to die is gain.

I said such utterance of unvanquishable certainty concerning the gain of death Paul

could never have reached of his own knowledge, or as the result of his own thinking. I have shown you why he could not, because to attain any certainty of a gain beyond death was an impossibility for men whose darkness the beams of the Gospel had not scattered. Says a notorious living infidel: "Socrates stands to-day, in the estimation of every thoughtful man at least, the peer of Christ." It seems to me that man must be carelessly, and even criminally thoughtless, who can so affirm. How doubting and dumb Socrates is about death; how disclosing Christ is about it, and into what radiant certainty concerning it does Christ lift Paul. Nay, Christ has done what Socrates never could do. He has brought life and immortality to light. As another has most well said: "The whitest line that Christ drew across the black surface of His time was that which He drew in His teaching and demonstration concerning death. He it was that led captivity captive; and men saw with amazement the King of Terrors, spoiled of arms and fettered, walking in the train of His triumph."

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition; but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."*

So, then, in the light of this Scripture, let us go on to think a little of this gain of death which Christ revealed to Paul.

Notice, first, *the seed and reason of a gainful death.* It is a Christful life. "For me to

* Philippians i. 21, 30.

live is Christ," the Apostle says, "and to die is gain." A death of gain is the harvest of a life for Christ.

Think of the structural difference between a man Christian and one un-Christian. I think it this, a difference in the *organizing center of the life.* George Washington and Benedict Arnold were both in the same service and members of the same army, but the one was patriot and the other traitor. And one was really traitor long before that disclosure of traitorhood about West Point. Think now of the reason and you can not get further back than this, of a difference in the controlling center and heart of the life. The main thought of the one was country; the main thought of the other, self. To the one to live was country, to the other to live was self. Up to the time when the test and temptation and revealing came, Arnold might *seem*, in all external action, to be a patriot. But when duty to country clashed with love of self, country went under, because the prevailing center and motive of the life carried the day—as it always does.

Now, an un-Christian man, wrapped about by a Christian atmosphere and moving along the grooves of a Christian civilization, may not seem, in external ways, to be a man so vastly various from a genuinely Christian one. He may wear an outward garment of well-doing even quite as shining. But when you get down to the *reason why* he robes himself with such an outward pureness, you will discover that Christ has nothing to do with it whatever; on the contrary, self has everything to do with it. On the whole, it is pleasanter for the man's self to be decent than outbreaking. On the whole, it is smoother for the feet of the self and more reputable. So he is a good citizen, neighbor, business man—and, I doubt not, he may be a very good one, only Christ does not impel him, has really, as a force and reason, nothing whatever to do with his goodness.

But your genuinely Christian man is different. Outwardly, in places where Christian standards of conduct rule, he may not *seem* so different, but inwardly he is mightily diverse. To him to live is Christ. The

central and pushing motive of his life is Christ. The place where all the reasons of action take their initial rise, like rivers from their originating fountains, is Christ. Self is undermost, Christ is uppermost. You can not put it more concisely—to him to live is Christ.

And now certainly, this man making Christ thus the organizing and authoritative center of his life, is at once different from the man who does not, and has also entered with Christ into closest marriage and alliance. What union closer possible than such reception of another into the innermost shrine and stimulating springs of action, that henceforth for this one to live shall be that other. The words of Scripture tell of such vital and vitalizing intimacy best, and yet even they do not say forth its whole closeness. "I in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." "Buried with Him through baptism." "Members of His body, of His flesh, of His bones." "Dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world." There is thus such a thing as the Christful life.

But now, to such intimate alliance with Himself the Lord Christ is warmly welcoming and to the utmost faithful. "Neither shall any perish, nor shall any pluck them out of My hand," is Christ's promise for such. "I will that they may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory," is Christ's intercessory prayer for such. "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Himself," is the transcendent estate into which Christ lifts such. To be sharers with Christ is, then, the gainful destiny of those to whom to live is Christ. And so the *introduction* to such destiny, the entrance into such heirship, must be immeasurable gain. Therefore the Christful life must blossom into the gainful death. Death to such a life can be only crowning, harvesting, transfiguration. Not king of terrors for such a life is death, but benignant warder-angel, making the gates of pearl swing inward for joyful feet. John Wesley, with his keen eyes dimmed with the death-shadows, can discern but shapes of indistinctness for the friends who stand around his bed.

"Who are these?" he asks. "We are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown," they answer. "Let me write," the dying man exclaims, but the right hand has forgot its cunning. "Let me write for you; what would you say?" one proffers. "Nothing but that God is with us," replies the dying man. And then, summoning his remaining strength, he whispers, "The best of all is, God is with us," and so he dies. And a life which has been lived with Christ in God shall surely go out and up companioned by the same Christ, and what can death be for such but incalculable gain? If for us to live be Christ, then married to Him by faith, and so eternal sharers in His glory, we hold irreversible and radiant mortgage on a gainful death.

O ye whose heads are whitening in Christ's service, bewail not, with the heathen Anacreon, that beautiful youth is gone. The failing step, the dulling ear, the wasting vigor are for you but prophecies of coronation. Death is only laying disintegrating hand upon you here that you may be built

up into gain unwasting and transcendent yonder. The fruitage of a Christful life, since thus you are admitted into share with Christ, must be a gainful death.

Notice, second, that, amid the light which streams from this Scripture upon death, we may be sure that death is gain, because *it is entrance into conscious and better being*. "For I am in a strait betwixt the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better; yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake." * Write this in light above the glooms of death—with Christ, for it is very far better.

There is revelation here of a *conscious* being after death. There are some who hold the hideous heresy of a dreamless stupor succeeding death. So implicated is mind with matter, they affirm, that the mind sinks into desolate unconsciousness when death smites the body down. You bury souls when you bury bodies. Your cemeteries are places where souls sleep, while the

* Philippians i. 23, 24, Revised Version.

bodies lying there are shredded into decay. The soul is not with Christ but is still manacled with the body, and sharer in its senselessness, while the sods are heaped above it and it awaits the resounding call of the Resurrection. There is now no Paradise for the dead in Christ, but only a long and sad stupidity. Body is at least master to such degree that its gyves are constantly riveted round the soul, though at last it may rise into conscious being with the body at the Resurrection. Such doctrine is a horrid and foreign materialism imported forcibly into Christianity, blighting it, as materialism always blights everything it touches. Poor gain in death for me, if, shoved over the precipice of death, the fall is to stun me into a long unconsciousness. To depart and be with Christ—it is not into such blackness that the window of these words looks. No, they disclose to me the radiance of continued and conscious being. The death which can smite my body can not lay its least finger on my soul. Like the eagle soaring through the mists which drape the valleys into the

clear sunshine, my soul, with unharmed wing, shall mount above the glooms of death, and go flying on to be with Christ. While I tremble at the mystery of death, I hear those fear-dispelling words making their music in the failing ears of the penitent thief as he waits tremulously for the awful change—"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Death is immediate introduction into conscious being with Christ. I can not tell all that may mean. It is enough to know that it is Paradise. And surely Paradise is gain.

There is revelation here also of an *immeasurably better* being—to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better. We think too much of death as a closing; it is an opening. We think too much of death as a finishing; it is a beginning. Yes, have faith enough to do it, "make lenses of your tears," and descry the glorious truth, stand by the graves of your loved who died in Christ and dare to say, what you have plain right to say—it is very far better. How much better words can not tell, nor our poor thought

conceive. So much better as freedom is beyond imprisonment. Tethered is Paul now, hampered by coupling-chain; but, should his doom be martyrdom, how much better the unhindered liberty of Paradise. And these you love, but who have died in Christ, were tethered. Coupling-chains held them and harassed them. You know how sickness made them prisoners, how weariness hung its weight about them, how care condemned them to anxious toil, how age was narrowing their range of action, how the mystery of life shut them in on every side with its straitening walls. But when death smote Paul it smote off his coupling-chain; and these you love, who died in Christ, death has disimprisoned too. They are introduced into all the spaciousness and variety and unimpeded being of the Father's House of many mansions. Though you are lonely, and your heart cries for them, for *them* it is very far better, for them death is gain. And for you too, if you are Christ's, shall come the gain of conscious being with Christ, of the better Para-

disiacal existence which death immediately confers.

Notice, third, what, as this Scripture teaches us, *should be our present mood toward life*, since death may be such a gain. "But if to live in the flesh—if this shall bring fruit from my work, what I shall choose I wot not."* If living in the flesh shall bring fruit from my work—how stirring with *noble, energetic* mood toward life, in view of the gain of death, these words. Since there is such gain in death, then we are not to idly drivel in a sentimental longing for it; then the poor whining amid life's toil and trouble, "I wish I were dead," is not the languid music which should sound out from us; then Elijah under the juniper tree is not the model for the Christian; then a disheartened, treadmill duty-doing is not the service we should render. Nay, rather, how much one has to stimulate his energy, how alert and high should be his enterprise, how he should gladly strain and strive for

* Philippians i. 22, marginal reading.

"fruit from work" for Christ's sake, as the Apostle did, since Christ shall surely make death crown the toilful life at last with such great gain. I like much that little poem of Mrs. Craik's, in which she has set to music a Russian proverb :

"Two hands across the breast, and work is done ;
Two pale feet crossed in rest, the race is run ;
Two eyes with coin-weights shut, and all tears cease ;
Two lips where grief is mute, and wrath at peace ;
So pray we oftentimes, mourning our lot,
God in His kindness answering not.

"Two hands to work addressed, aye for His praise ;
Two feet that never rest walking His ways ;
Two eyes that look above still, through all tears ;
Two lips that speak but love, never more fears ;
So cry we afterward, low on our knees,
'Pardon those erring prayers, Father, hear these.'"

Notice, fourth, what, in the light of this Scripture, *should be the daily carriage of ourselves,* in view of the gain of death. We should carry ourselves *worthily.* "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel

of Christ."* That is to say, play the citizen of Heaven. That various pleasure might seduce him from devotion to his Saviour, the friends of Count Zinzendorf, in his young days, sent him into France; but the youth of nineteen, amidst the enticements of foreign travel, took this for his motto—"Æternitati."

We should carry ourselves *patiently*. "That ye *stand fast* in one spirit."† That was a name exquisitely significant the Moravian missionaries gave to one of their stations among the Bush Negroes in Guiana. They called it "Bambey," a word which in the native tongue means "Only wait," "Have patience."‡ And, standing fast, even in such sterile field they reaped at last—even as he who is faithful unto death shall reap the gain of death.

We should carry ourselves with our brethren *unitedly*. "With one soul striving for the faith of the Gospel."§ Striving, not

* Philippians i. 27, Revised Version. † Ditto.

‡ Moravian Missions, Thompson, p. 67, 141.

§ Philippians i. 27, Revised Version.

amongst each other or *against* each other, but helping one another in spreading the common faith.*

We should carry ourselves *boldly*. "And in nothing affrighted by the adversaries."† "The word is particularly applied to horses; *shying* at some unexpected and formidable object. How many of our fears deserve no better name! What imaginary terrors do we start aside from in our Christian course. Walk up to them, face them, survey them steadily, and they are not."‡ Surely the man for whom death is gain should be no coward.

We should carry ourselves with a *quiet dignity in suffering*. "Because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer in His behalf.§ For we know that our light affliction, which is but for a season, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

* Commentary on Philippians, Newland, *in loco*.
† Philippians, i, 27.
‡ Vaughan on Philippians, *in loco*.
§ Philippians, i. 29.

"A pilgrim once—so runs an ancient tale—
Old, worn, and spent, crept down a shadowed vale!
On either side rose mountains bleak and high,
Chill was the gusty air, and dark the sky,
The path was rugged, and his feet were bare;
His faded cheek was seamed with pain and care;
His heavy eyes upon the ground were cast,
And every step seemed feebler than the last.

"The valley ended where a naked rock
Rose, sheer from earth to heaven, as if to mock
The pilgrim who had crept that toilsome way;
But while his dim and weary eyes essay
To find an outlet in the mountain side,
A ponderous, sculptured, brazen door he spied,
And, tottering toward it with fast failing breath,
Above the portal read, 'The Gate of Death.'

"He could not stay his feet that led thereto:
It yielded to his touch, and, passing through,
He came into a world all bright and fair;
Blue were the heavens, and balmy was the air;
And, lo! the blood of youth was in his veins,
And he was clad in robes that held no stains
Of his long pilgrimage. Amazed, he turned:
Behold, a golden door behind him burned
In that fair sunlight, and his wondering eyes,
Now lustreful and clear as those new skies,
Free from the mists of age, of care, of strife,
Above the portal read, 'The Gate of Life.'"*

* S. S. Conant.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MIND OF CHRIST.

NO Epistle of the great Apostle is at once so joyful in itself, or so full of praise toward conquering converts, as the one addressed to these Philippian Christians.

There was no church which seemed to the Apostle as perfectly as theirs to touch the church ideal.

Yet even with this church he was not content.

Constantly, through the whole range of the Apostle's feeling, there is the urging of a noble discontent. He himself is not what he would be, what he longs to be, what he hopes to be. Contented he is with his allotment. He seeks no higher earthly place and honor than that of a buffeted, persecuted, poverty-stricken, straining, wandering Apos-

tleship. He has learned in whatsoever *state* he is therewith to be content. But at ease with his spiritual attainment he never is.

Though, as he writes to the Corinthians, he had been caught up into Paradise, and had heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter*—though there had been yielded him surprising wealths of revelations—yet with what he is in personal likeness to Jesus Christ, in conformity of heart and character with Him, he is not satisfied. A little further on in this Epistle, and you come to that strenuous burst of spiritual purpose—"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."†

And as the Apostle was stirring always with a noble discontent inwardly toward himself, so was he restless for a better spir-

* 2 Cor. xii. 3, Revised Version.

† Phil. iii. 13, 14, Revised Version.

itual life outwardly in others. Along the immense distance between the topmost Christian on the earth and the shining Christ in Heaven there was room for immeasurable growth.

Good and true as these Philippian Christians were, and as worthy of praise, and as gratifying to the Apostle's heart, they were not yet perfect; the old Adam had not yet been completely vanquished by the new; upon the bright surface of their church life there were yet evident some ugly blurs and blotches.

A spirit of strife had sprung up among them. The last chapter of this Epistle carries this message: "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord."* Evidently factions are at work; evidently all are not in honor preferring one another.† If there were not open feuds and distinct parties, there were rivalries and disputings. In the church music there was some dissonance. In the church

* Phil. iv. 2, Revised Version.

† Rom. xii. 10.

feast there was, at least, a small skeleton in the closet. The dome of the Baptistry at Pisa is so constructed that the sounds uttered beneath it come back in sweet reply of chiming melody, and the clash of a discord even is changed to harmony as the "resonant vault" receives it and returns it to the ear. But the harmonizing dome of a Christian love above this Philippian church had become damaged, and the grating noises of a worldly anger and a bad contention could be heard.

All this is evident enough from the verses which open the second chapter.

Let nothing, says the Apostle, be done through faction ;* do not allow yourselves, O Philippian Christians, to carry on your church life through the struggles and wire-pullings of hostile cliques ; or, through vain-glory †—through the mere emptiness of glory, through the poor and pitiable and bubble satisfaction that any one of you has reached his end at the expense of somebody's else end ; through the miserable and un-

* Phil. ii. 3, Revised Version. † Ditto.

brotherly conceit that any of you have been smarter, quicker, further-sighted, longer-headed.

But in lowliness of mind, each counting the other better than himself *—instead of studying your own fancied excellencies, thinking how your side ought to triumph, how much better is your view of some question, how, because you are so good, you ought surely to win the good of victory—instead of thus shutting your eyes to everything except what you are and what you want, and so ministering to strife and keeping its bad fires flaming—turn your eyes from your own wishes and your own excellencies to those of others, let each count the other better than himself. "It would have been absurd for Sir Isaac Newton to have considered his servant a better astronomer than himself; the question would be whether Newton used his gifts so much to God's glory as his servant did his lesser gifts. And so the pious Christian does not inquire, 'What is that man as compared with me?'

* Phil. ii. 3, Revised Version.

but, 'But what would he have been with my advantages?'"* Think thus each toward each. Be not self-seeking do not make self the center, do not gaze with introverted eye, all the time, on what you are and hold and want—not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others †—and so put out the bad burnings of fierce strifes, and fulfill ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.‡

Well, we are apt to think of the Apostolic age as the church's golden one—that a very fragment of the unvexed crystal sea, spreading its smoothness before the Throne, fell out of Heaven, and brought its sweet placidity into these little companies of primitive believers; that there was never the least fracture of that brotherhood and sisterhood; that there was never the jar of

* Newland on Phil., p. 62.

† Phil, ii. 4, Revised Version.

‡ Phil. ii. 2, Revised Version.

parties or the baneful look askance of jealousies ; that each looked not on his own things first, but first always on his brother's. But when we think thus we can not have read our New Testament with thoroughness. It is certain that sometimes Euodia and Syntyche fell foul of each other in the Philippian church meeting ; it is certain that even in this Philippian church, most praised and loved of all the Apostle's planting, there was the clash of faction and the blight and bitterness of self-seeking.

Toward this evil, which was hurting even this Philippian church, the Apostle turns himself, seeking to persuade them from it, and to lift them into the more Christlike life.

Strife, vain-glory, every man looking on his own things—that is to say, faction, an empty pride, selfishness, we have seen the ugly features of these things plainly appearing in our modern life ; we have seen the ugly features of these things plainly appearing among modern Christians. In families, in churches, in society, in business they do

their evil work. They ought not to be. They are spots on the feasts of love. They need cure. The Apostle had one sovereign cure for them among these Philippians. The cure for them is the cure among ourselves. Very practical is our thought, then—*the Apostolic cure for faction, vanity, selfishness.*

This is the cure : *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*

Consider, then, the mind which was in Christ Jesus. There is no passage in our New Testament more wonderful than this in which the Apostle tells us of *that mind :*

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every name ; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth : and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." *

* Phil. ii. 5 11.

Such is the mind which was in Christ Such is the mind which is to be in all Christians. Such is the mind which, being in Christians, will kill strife, vanity, self-seeking.

First, this Scripture shows us *Christ in His divine and pre-existent glory*—who being in the form of God; that is to say, being originally, pre-existently in the form of God. Difficult work here to grasp with clearness the ideas these words suggest; difficult because we are holding speech about the Divine Nature, which must task our puny thought and overflow our shallow words. But *form* of God—what idea can we get from these dim words? We must get no material idea, as when we say that matter possesses form—is round or square, is large or small, is beautiful or unbeautiful. We are thinking of Deity, and God is spirit, and so can have no form at all in such a sense. But what does the Scripture mean by being in the form of God? As another has, I think, truthfully expressed it, it means that

which, in a spiritual being, is most *analogous* to form in matter, namely, *manifested dignity and glory.** Our Lord hints at the meaning when He prays that His disciples may be lifted to behold the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.† The Epistle to the Hebrews hints at the meaning when it speaks of Christ as the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of His substance.‡ Being in the form of God means, I think, that Christ was pre-existently, in the fullest sense, shining with the glory of God. "Whatever the Father was in point of manifested dignity and glory, that, previous to His incarnation, the Son was also."§ There was no splendor in which the Father stood in which Christ did not stand. There was no bliss the Father had Christ did not have. There was no praise sounding from angelic choirs toward the Throne of the Father of which the Son was not the object also. Being in the form

* Cowles' Shorter Epistles, *in loco.*

† John xvii. 24. ‡ Heb. i. 3.

§ Cowles' Shorter Epistles, *in loco.*

of God was being in the might and majesty and supereminence of God. He was in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

Second, this Scripture shows us the Lord Christ *refusing to hold and use this Divine Glory for His own sake*—"who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize, a thing to be grasped, to be on an equality with God."* Christ, because of His divine nature, and so because it was His right, standing in the very center and focus of the Infinite Glory, did not esteem even this glory a prize to be grasped and held and selfishly enjoyed. He was no Epicurean deity, isolated in His own blissfulness, divided by the chasm of an infinite carelessness from

> "Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
> Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands,"†

with which the earth is filled.

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* Revised Version.

† Tennyson's "Lotus Eaters."

His first thought was not His own beatitude. Even the Divine Glory was **not a** thing to be held selfishly.

Third, this Scripture shows us *the Lord Christ actually laying aside this Form of God, this infinite Dignity and Splendor,* — but emptied Himself. Oh! all the mystery of the Incarnation is in this phrase emptied Himself. There are heights in it and depths in it immeasurably beyond any reach of ours.

It was not so wonderful that a baby should be born. That strange advent of the child out of the unknown into this sad and wailing world had been taking place since, back four thousand years, Adam and Eve had bent in awe above their first-born. Nor was it so uncommon that a babe should be born into poverty, and find a manger for a cradle. Caves are not rare in Palestine. Much of the rock of the country is soft and porous and scooped out easily. It was quicker work and cheaper to gouge out a cave than to build a barn. Caves in that country are sometimes dwellings, sometimes

sepulchres, sometimes tarrying places for the night when no beter inn is by, sometimes stables. So it was no uncommon thing for people to be found abiding in such places or for a baby to be born there. It only signified that the child ushered into life in such a place, began it at the lowest, had his portion with the poorest, that there were no separations of wealth or lordly palace between this child and the lowliest Hebrew baby beginning the course of life anywhere in Palestine.

But the wonder was that He, who had been in the form of God, should so empty Himself as to be born a babe; and neither in the resplendent temple nor in the lordliest palace, but in such a place. He, who was in the form of God, actually laid aside His glory, and emptied Himself into a babe's birth and a manger-cradle. That *He* should do it—that is the wonder.

Fourth, this Scripture shows us *the Lord Christ standing in precisely the same relation to Humanity in which He had stood to Deity,—*

taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. Form—form of God, form of a servant, the very word which told of His pre-incarnate glory, tells now of His post-incarnate humiliation; what it means in the first case, precisely that it means in this last case. Thoroughly Divine and so rightfully in the central blaze of the Divine Majesty, He is now as thoroughly human, as utterly in the lowliness of humanity, as exactly in its likeness. Hold these two thoughts about Christ always: Without reservation, Deity; in the same perfect meaning, man.

Fifth, this Scripture shows us *the Lord Christ descending to still lower depths*,—"and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."* In His forgetfulness of self from no last limit of sacrifice did He withhold Himself—from no doom of sin belonging to the nature He

* Revised Version.

had assumed, from no shame, from no agony—obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross.

Sixth, this Scripture shows us *the Lord Christ in His Exaltation.* But will you notice that all this disclosure about the Exaltation centers about a special name. That name is significant of much. "Wherefore, also, God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow."* *Jesus*, that is the name of the Exaltation. The Lord Christ won that name through His Humiliation. That bitter ancient hater of the Gospel, Celsus, drew once a picture of the sufferings of Christ upon the cross; and when he had painted Him crowned with thorns and nailed to the rough wood, he exclaimed: "In the name of wonder, why, on this occasion at least, does He not act the God, and hurl some signal vengeance on the authors of this in-

* Revised Version.

sult and anguish?" Well, that is not an unnatural question for a man who will not accept the spirit of the Gospel. Surely He could have done it. It was certainly within His power to do it. O profane Celsus, your taunt is only that of the first tormentors—"If He be the Christ, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe on Him." Without doubt He could have descended from that cross. More than that, He could have remained in His first glory, and in the form of God stood forever in that shining. But He could *not* have hurled vengeance, or come down from the cross, or remained in His first glory and risen into the name and victory of *Jesus*. Said the angel to Joseph concerning Mary: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name *Jesus*, for He shall save His people from their sins." Jesus, then, means Saviour; and it was only through the immolation of the self that the Son could become Saviour. He might have stood in His first glory forevermore alone; but it was only as forgetting self He descended to our human

lostness, that He could rise into the Exaltation of the Saviour Jesus, and lift with Himself multitudes to glory. This, then, is the Exaltation rising out of the Humiliation—it all centers in that name *Jesus;* rising out of His Humiliation into His Exaltation, He brings as Jesus, with Himself many sons into glory. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. It can stay a corn of wheat, but it must stay *that*—it is only out of the buried and dying seed that you can win a harvest. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father *—this empire of sovereign, self-forgetting, suffering Love, somehow, at last, the universe shall recognize.

No one can be more sensible than I am of the meagreness and feebleness of this at-

* Revised Version.

tempted exposition of this great Scripture. But out of it we can surely, at least with some clearness, discern this wondrous sight —*The Deity utterly forgetful of self for the sake of others.*

And if this mind of Christ be, in any wise, our own mind, it must certainly exorcise the demons of angry faction, and a poor and puffed-up vanity, and a hard, uncaring selfishness. Put this mind of Christ thoroughly into these Philippians, and strife, vain-glory, a looking on the things of self to the exclusion of those of others, must be slain. Put that mind into ourselves, and we must become the loving and lovable dispensers of the peace of Heaven. And to be Christian is to seek to have this mind, is to absorb this Spirit.

"Mohammed's truth lay in a holy book,
Christ's in a sacred life.
So, while the world rolls on from change to change,
And realms of thought expand,
The letter stands without expanse or range,
Stiff as a dead man's hand;
While, as the life-blood fills the glowing form,
The Spirit Christ has shed

Flows through the ripening ages, fresh and warm,
More felt than heard or read."

We are Christian in the proportion in which we have absorbed this mind of Christ.

Behold, now, the working of this mind of Christ in two or three directions.

In the direction of the Church.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not, therefore, not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not, therefore, not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the mem-

bers each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye can not say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those parts of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need; but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members each in his part.*

That is to say, a church is the ideal

* 1 Cor. xii. 12–27, Revised Version.

Brotherhood and Sisterhood. It is to be organized into oneness. As Augustine says, "Give oneness, and it is a people; take oneness away, and it is a crowd."* A church is to be a gathered, consenting, united people; it is not to be the chance flinging together of a careless throng. It is to be an animated body, made up of parts, indeed, but each several part sharing in the common life, and ministering various but essential and agreeing and converging service. Factions are not to disturb it; cliques are not to split it; rivalries are not to rend it; social distinctions imported from the outside world are not to divide it: disdainful hauteur, chasm-making refusals of intercourse among its membership are not to chill it; captious criticisms of member upon member are not to wound it; gossipping, slanderous tongues are not to slash and cut amidst it; but with sweet and kindly recognitions by all of the various ministries of each, as the eye recognizes the service of the hand, and the hand

* Quoted in Newland's Commentary on Philippians, p. 60.

recognizes the service of the foot, and with tender clemency toward the lowliest and the weakest, since those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary,—the whole body is to share a common life, and push with marshalled energies toward a common purpose, and compel a little of the music of Heaven's harmony amid the janglings and the jarrings of this present evil world.

But the only thing which can make such ideal in the least sense actual, is the Mind of Christ. It is forgetfulness of self, not thoughtfulness of self, that is the root of which brotherhood is the bloom. If refusing the mind of Christ, my first question is, what can I get and keep for the self's sake? I cleave myself from others, and do my part toward shattering brotherhood; if seeking to make His mind my own, who, being originally in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, my first question is, what have I that I may use and yield for others' sake? I join myself to others, and do my part

toward the building up and braiding together of the Brotherhood. "What is it, then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto *edifying*"* — unto the building up of the Brotherhood, and through the contribution of this or that by this one and that one to the well-being of the whole. As the stained and disturbing city snow flees before the sunbeams of the spring, so chilling enmities and cleaving hardnesses and staining slanderings slink and pass away in the genial presence of the Mind of Christ.

"'Tis a pleasant thing to see
Brethren in the Lord agree;
Children of a God of love
Live as they should live above:
Acting each a Christian part,
One in lip and one in heart.

"As the precious ointment shed
Upon Aaron's hallowed head.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 26, Revised Version.

Downward through his garments stole
Spreading odor o'er the whole,
So from our High Priest above
To His Church flows heavenly love.

"Gently as the dews distil
Down on Zion's holy hill,
Dropping gladness where they fall,
Bright'ning and refreshing all,
Such is Christian Union, shed,
Through the members from the Head.

"Where divine affection lives,
There the Lord His blessing gives;
Where on earth His will is done,
There His Heaven is half begun.
Lord, our great example prove;
Teach us all like Thee to love."*

But see, again, this working of the Mind of Christ *in the direction of the Home.*

That is a very beautiful picture of a Christian wedded life which has come down to us from the Church Father Tertullian: "They are together in the Church of God, and in the Supper of the Lord; they share with one another their grievances, their per-

* Henry F. Lyte, 1834.

secutions, and their joys; neither hides anything from the other; neither avoids the other; the sick are visited by them with pleasure, and the needy supported; psalms and hymns resound between them, and they mutually strive who shall best praise their God. Christ is delighted to see and hear things like these; He sends His peace on such as these; where two are, there is He, and where He is, evil comes not." *

But that which, in any case, can make such picture fact, is this and only this, the having the Mind of Christ. In the closeness of the marriage relation there must be a *process* of adjustment. Heart must get into chime with heart. Two different natures have come together out of different educations and different circumstances. Love binds them, but probably all along love's gamut the pitch of each is not at first precisely correspondent. There may be his quickness of speech and temper, or hers;

* Tertullian, "*Ad Uxorem*," lib. xi. 17. Quoted by Charles Stanford, D.D., in his "Life of Doddridge," p. 55.

his neglectfulness of sweet and satisfying courtesies, or hers ; his difference of view, or hers ; there may be any one of the ten thousand things which in the beginning of a marriage, consecrated though it be by the profoundest love, fret and jar and trouble. Such things may be

> "the little rift within the lute,
> That by and by will make the music mute,
> And, ever widening, slowly silence all," *

or they may be cured. For the Mind of Christ is cure for them. If each self forgets the self in the other self, if each self seek to adjust itself to the other self for the sake of the other self, the two selves shall so merge into each that they two shall be one self, and the symbol likest Heaven which you can ever find under the arching skies shall be that home. And the sweet courtesies between the father and the mother shall breed courtesies as sweet and sacrificial and harmonizing among the children. A father, picking his way carefully along the mount-

* Tennyson, "Idyls of the King." *Vivien.*

ain side, heard his child's voice behind him, crying out, "Take a safe path, papa; I am coming after you." But if the path should not be safe, the child would follow, too. A father was reproving his young son strongly for "fretting" at his sister, and ordered him to leave the room. The boy reluctantly obeyed, but, just as he closed the door, looked back at his father, saying, "We don't call it that when you talk so to mamma."

Ah, how much we need the Mind of Christ within our homes.

See, also, the working of the Mind of Christ in the *realm of business.*

Yes, you pay him so much, and in return he does so much work for you. You stand together in the relation of employer and employé. That is a right relation. But is that all the relation in which you stand? Can it be all, even though you refuse to recognize more? Is he, then, only a cog in your wheel, an iron lever by which you lift your weights of enterprise, a piston-shaft in

your machinery? Is he not a man, with a man's feelings, and, deeper than the mere commercial relation of employer and employé, are you not his brother? There are laws of political economy regulating supply and demand right and irreversible. But is there not in God's universe something beside these laws? Is there not the possibility and the ability of a brother's heart cherishing within itself something of the Mind of Christ? Need laws of political economy shut off sympathy? Can laws of political economy never be the channels for the flowing of a self-forgetting love? That young man, homeless and homesick in the great city, bestormed by temptations—I do not say that you should pay him more, but I do say that, filled with the Mind of Christ, you should love him more. Do you speak to him a kindly word? Do you let him know that you are interested in his welfare? Do you help him to stand amid temptation? Do you show him the Christlike heart? Political economy is well enough; but it is not enough. It is the Mind of Christ which

business needs, that the strained relations of employer on the one hand, and employed on the other, of which the times are full of symptoms, may become less tense and terrible.

"Almost up, almost up," was the cry of the wounded sergeant, as they laid him down on the battle-field, and watched tenderly his dying struggles.

"Where did they hit you, sergeant?"

"Almost up."

"No, sergeant, but where did the ball strike you?"

"Almost up."

"But, sergeant, you do not understand; where were you wounded?"

Turning back the cloak which had been thrown over the wound, he showed the upper arm and shoulder, mashed and mangled with a shell. Looking at the wound, he said: "That is what did it. I was hugging the standard to my blouse, and making for the top. I was almost up when that ugly shell knocked me over. If they had let

me alone a little longer, two minutes longer, I should have planted the colors on the top."

"Almost up?"

"Almost up."

And as death set its white seal upon his face, they heard him saying this only: "Almost up, almost up."

Self was forgotten. The flag held all his thoughts.

This is what we need in church, at home, in business, everywhere; less thought of self, more thought of some great cause, more thought of others—even the MIND OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER V.

OUR WORK AND GOD'S.

SEVERAL times I have met the statement that when the historian, Henry Thomas Buckle, on a visit from England to the East, and smitten down in the noon and fullness of his prime, lay dying in Damascus, his chief plaint was, "My book! my book!" He had put his life into his "History of Civilization." He had gone on through two volumes of it. Compared with his plan, what he had already done was but as the foundation to the building. Now death had gripped him, and his life-work must stand forevermore a fragment. So he died, wailing, "My book! my book!"

You will remember that the great picture of the Transfiguration, which, in the gallery of the Vatican, has held the wondering gaze of men for so many generations, is but a

partial picture as far as Raphael is concerned. Death caught his hand midway in that high enterprise. It is but a fragment, after all, which has entranced the world.

Very pathetic to me those last words of Disraeli—dying in his manor house at Beaconsfield, so full of years, and at the summit of such romantic and surprising achievement—"I am overwhelmed." Very pathetic, because they seem to tell of many purposes with which his brain was busy, whose finishing he must now give over seeing. As far on even as he had gone in life, he was not done with doing. Even for him the future was crowded with astute plans. But, "I am overwhelmed," he said. Death had dashed in like a tide, and drowned but fragments.

And, whether death come in youth's morning, or at the noon of prime, or wait until the shadows of life's evening have lengthened way beyond the limit of threescore years and ten, it comes as a surprise and a devastation. It comes to tread down, like wheat beneath the tramp of a tempest,

many a harvest men had hoped to reap. It comes to put the finite stamp of incompleteness upon our endeavor.

> "How blest we should be,
> We have always believed,
> Had we really achieved
> What we nearly achieved.
> The thought that most thrilled
> Our existence, is one
> That before we could frame it
> In language is gone.
> The more we gaze up into Heaven
> The more do we feel our gaze fail.
> All attempts to explore,
> With earth's finite insight,
> Heaven's infinite gladness,
> So baffled by something,
> Like infinite sadness."

In many ways does our Elder Brother stand out in contrast from His brethren. In this most startling contrast among others—that He could say, what no one of His brethren could ever find it but the most terrible perversion of the truth to say, that His work in this world of ours was a complete

whole—every duty done, every purpose actualized, every intended achievement crowned, and with a triumph untouched by even the suspicion of a disappointment. That was a wonderful cry of wonderful victory which went floating off from those young lips, as He hung there on that cross —"*It is finished!*" Here was no fragment. To the last jot and tittle the awful errand had been gone through with. The Great Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world was offered, and not the Infinite Eye of Infinite Purity could detect in it flaw or failure. So perfectly had our Elder Brother wrought through the Great Work for His human brethren, that for them there was left no slightest supplement of expiating service.

As another says: "We, who have broken God's law and finished nothing, have a new and living way made open by His blood. When He said, 'It is finished,' His joy was not for Himself, merely that His suffering was over, but for His people—that the poorest, and the most sinful, and the most imperfect might now come in all peace to

God—that a door had been opened which no man and no demon could shut." *

So that toward our salvation, in the sense of *winning* the Redemption Christ has purchased for us by His finished work, no man has any work to do whatever. Any working toward this, on man's part, is the sheerest impertinence—since how dare a man think of in any wise adding to that which in itself is already divinely perfect? A man may not try to piece out his own working by Christ's work. Christ's work has no room for such piecing. It is finished. A man may not think that he can half-way, or quarter-way, or the hundredth-part-of-an-inch-way save himself, and then, when his strength for working fails, grasp at the work of Christ, and finish out with that, and so be saved a good deal by Christ, but at least a little by himself. The work of Christ is, to the last limit, achieved. "But He, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." † "There re-

* Life of Jesus Christ, by W. R. Nicoll, M.A., p. 321.

† Hebrews x. 12, Revised Version

maineth no more a sacrifice for sins."* It is already made. It is perfectly accomplished. He who was the victim on the cross-altar has told us, *it is finished.*

No. Toward that finished Atonement man can stand in but one possible relation —never in the relation of working out in the least degree an atonement for himself— but always and only in the relation of by faith accepting a completed atonement already outwrought for him. You will remember the answer of Jesus to those Jews who came to Him, asking, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" † This was His answer: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Their duty was not doing. Their primal, supreme duty was believing. Their outset action was not, by attempting this thing and that and that, to seek to win for themselves God's favor; it was to cease all such attempt, and by faith to accept to the full Him who had come to lift them into

* Hebrews x. 26, Revised Version.

† John vi. 28, Revised Version.

God's favor, to do for them that which, because of sin, they themselves could never do.

And what Jesus said to these Jews, He says to every child of Adam also—this is *the* work of God, that ye *believe* on Him whom He hath sent. If you want salvation, do not begin to work, begin to believe. That is your first, chief, overtopping, overmastering, undermost, uppermost, including, special, emphatic, critical, saving duty—believing, accepting for yourself the finished work of Christ. It is not working. Forevermore this is the divine method of salvation, as Paul tells it to Titus: "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, *which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;* that, being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." * Dr. Culross tells how Jonas Justus, wiping the cold sweat from the forehead of the dying Luther,

* Titus iii. 5, 7, Revised Version.

heard him praying and committing his soul with great confidence into the hands of the Heavenly Father, and then, as if he were grasping hard after the ground of such certain hope, he repeated aloud this passage in Latin, as he had learned it when a child: "Sic enim Deus delixit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret, ut omnis qui credit in eam, non pereat, sed habeat vitam æternam."* And you will notice that Luther's confidence in that utmost crisis was not in what he had done, but in Him whom he had believed. And that is the only confidence sinners can ever have. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory."† Not by works, but by faith in the finished work of Christ, must you and I reach salvation, if we reach it at all. That is the Gospel, if anything is the Gospel; that is the Good News of God.

* "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

† Ephesians ii. 8, 9, Revised Version.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear, and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure." *

Work out your own salvation. If ever there were a distinct statement about working, surely this is one. If ever there were a distinct command for work, it is here!

What shall we say, then? That Paul declares one thing at one time and another at another; that Paul antagonizes Paul?

By no means. Two considerations will relieve us from the seeming difficulty.†

First. These words concerning our work are addressed to Christian people, and to such only. They are not words to un-Christian people. They are not written to the unregenerate at Philippi, but to the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons ‡—to those who have put faith in the finished work of Christ.

* Philippians ii. 12, 13.

† Maclaren's Sermons, first series, pp. 211, 213.

‡ Philippians i. 1, 2.

And speech to Christian people must be something different from that to un-Christian. The first duty of an un-Christian man is to believe, but having believed, and having thus become Christian, there follow then the duties of the Christian life to which he is industriously to give himself.

Second. The idea covered by the term salvation is a very wide one, and that idea shines in various though never in opposing lights in the New Testament. Sometimes salvation represents what I have shown it to, in what I have been saying—the eternal deliverance from the guilt and condemnation of sin. This has been purchased for the soul by the finished work of Christ. Toward that the soul must stand in the attitude of faith, and of faith only.

But, besides, salvation is looked at in the New Testament from another point of view, namely, as the internal and gradual process of deliverance from the power of sin in our own hearts; as the dethroning of the old Adam and the enthroning of the new; as the in-working within ourselves of another and

Christly temper; as sanctification distinguished from justification. This, too, is salvation beheld from the inward side. It is not alone the Divine purpose that we be just forgiven, and so the hindrance toward Heaven of the law which we have violated be removed; it is also the Divine purpose that we become conformed to the image of His Son. And, toward salvation in this sense of an internal sanctification, of an innermost conforming of character to Christ, there is room and place for our own constant and consenting working together with all helping and purifying Grace.

It is with this meaning of salvation our present Scripture shines. Toward salvation in its sense we are to work. We can not get on without working. "Work as well as believe, and in the daily practice of faithful obedience, in the daily subjugation of your own spirits to His Divine power, in the daily crucifixion of your own flesh with its affections and lusts, in the daily straining after loftier heights of godliness and purer atmospheres of devotion and love—apprehend that

for which you are apprehended of Christ." * How manifestly here wide range and stringent reason for working.

I remember how my father took me to college when I was a boy. I did not earn the money to pay the fare for the long journey; he earned the money and paid the fare, and I accepted the journey from him; I had no work whatever concerning that. I did not earn the money to buy my books; he earned the money and bought the books; I accepted them from him; I had no working to do with that. But when at last we reached the college, and my father had entered me, and put before me room and board and teachers and apparatus, and said to me, "My son, here is your college, I will support you in it; here is your grand chance of education"—up to that time, as far as working was concerned, I had had nothing to do whatever; but now, to get into myself the education thus, *by him*, set against my hand, to receive into myself what teachers and libraries and apparatus and recitations

* Maclaren's Sermons, first series, p. 213.

could give me, to make them my own by a real appropriation, to transmute what was external into something internal, now there was room and place for my working as you can plainly see.

Between myself and ignorance my father stood with what he had wrought out for me, in the way of means, in the way of the proffer of that college; as far as working was concerned, I had naught to do, I had simply to receive all from him. But, standing there on the threshold of that college, to make actual within myself the education thus proffered to me and accepted by me, I must take hold with my consenting faculties and work.

Between myself and the guilt and condemnation of my sin Christ stands with His finished redemption, and says, "Here, it is thine; by faith take it. With that your working has no relation whatsoever." But, when it comes to having the high results of that redemption wrought out in myself, to becoming like the Christ who has so saved me, to meeting with an internal sanctifica-

tion that external justification—with this my strenuous and joyful and consenting working has much to do.

It is, then, toward this internal salvation of sanctification that the Apostle is looking when he speaks about our work, when he says work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. And so it is evident enough Paul does not clash with Paul.

Three things are suggested by our Scripture:

A Duty.

A Method.

An Encouragement.

First. A Duty. The Duty is that we *work.* Work out your own salvation.

Let us be at our duty, then, for many reasons.

Because within every one of us there is immense work to be done. A little child was once asked what it was to be a Christian. She replied: "For me to be a Christian is to live as Jesus would live, and behave as Jesus would behave, if He were a

little girl and lived at our house." I do not know a completer definition of practical religion. For you to be a Christian is for you to live in your house as Jesus would, were He you and in your circumstances. Is there not need of constant, careful, subtle, painstaking working, that you, even in the least measure, approximate such ideal? What change "into something rich and strange" would come into many a home were such high working begun, and even measurably carried on! In what wondrous and sweet sense would salvation come to that house! How tangles would untie, and icy estrangements thaw, and the green eye of jealousies grow blue and beaming with soft love, and selfishness, like the snow before the sun, fly before the genial warmth of sacrifice, and the peace which the world can neither give nor take away begin to speak its benedictions. But to be religious is to be and do as Christ would in your circumstances. You have no license to quit working toward such ideal. You can claim nc immunity from such steady and strong en-

deavor. You are passionate, you say; but still you are to gain Christlike control of passion. You are weary, you say; but still it is to be your meat to do the Divine will as it was His, though the journey had been exhausting, and the noon heats were fierce as He sprang to tell of the living water to the stained woman of Samaria. You are discouraged, you say; but still you are to struggle toward the courage of Him whom not even the cross could daunt. You are not to be the sport and play of circumstances; in your sphere you are to seek to attain even His grand lordship over circumstance. Mr. Thomas Hughes has said many a wise and timely word both to boys and men; but perhaps he has said none wiser or timelier than those in which he tells of the meaning and the influence of the teachings of his great instructor, Dr. Thomas Arnold. Dr. Arnold "certainly did teach us—thank God for it—that we could not cut our lives into slices, and say, 'In this slice your actions are indifferent, and you needn't trouble your heads about them one

way or another ; but in this slice mind what you are about, for they are important'—a pretty muddle we should have been in had he done so. He taught us that in this wonderful world no boy or man can tell which of his actions is indifferent and which not ; that by a thoughtless word or look we may lead astray a brother for whom Christ died. He taught us that life is a whole, made up of actions and thoughts and longings, great and small, mean and ignoble ; therefore the only true wisdom for boy or man is to bring the whole life into obedience to Him whose world we live in, and who has purchased us with His blood." And that is the only wisdom for boy or man. But to make that capture does require tough campaigning. And in every one of us there is still large territory unconquered for Christ. Because, then, there is so much to do, we should set ourselves about the doing it—and Work.

Also, I am to take up this duty of Work because my earnestness in such working is the only possible test that I am a man who

has been saved by faith, that I am one who has accepted the finished redemption outwrought by Jesus Christ.

For Christ must stand to me—if He stand to me in any vital relation whatsoever—not in one alone, but always in two relations, and in the last by reason of the first. He must stand to me, not only in the relation of Saviour, whose finished redemption I by faith accept; but, because I believe in Him as my Redeemer, I must also come under His sovereignty as my Lord. Lord must He be to me as well as Saviour. He saves me from the guilt and condemnation of my old nature that I may serve Him with my new nature against the old. The terms on which He saves me are the terms of a total self-surrender, that I may do His will. And so the only genuine test that I have been saved by Him is that I joyfully go on in the *practice of His will.* And the practice of His will is working—following Him, taking up the cross, refusing to give ear to what is base, keeping open ear to what is high. Works, then, are the fruit of faith. The

evidence that I have savingly believed, is that I am in strenuous work to do the will of Him whom I have savingly believed.

Also, do this duty of Work because there is no one who can do it for you. Work out your *own* salvation.

When Dr. David Livingstone was a young man he stood by the death-bed of David Hogg, one of the religious patriarchs of the little Scotch village of Blantyre, where he lived. And the aged Christian's dying advice to him was, "Now, lad, make religion the every-day business of your life, and not a thing of fits and starts; for if you do, temptation and other things will get the better of you."* But it was only David Livingstone who could do that for David Livingstone. And it was because he did it, that against the dark background of Africa so radiant a specimen of the Christian life shines out. Later in his life, Dr. Livingstone was obliged to navigate a Government

* "Personal Life of David Livingstone," by Dr. W. G. Blakie, p. 17.

steamer sixteen hundred miles up and down the Zambesi River. It was a task of exceeding difficulty, for the river was unexplored and Dr. Livingstone was not an educated navigator. "My great difficulty," he writes to a friend, "is calling out 'starboard' when I mean 'port,' and feeling crusty when I see the helmsman putting the helm the wrong way."* But there was nobody who could work out for David Livingstone salvation from that natural crustiness but David Livingstone, assisted by God's good grace. Work out your *own* salvation ; and therefore set yourself at the working ; there is no one else to do it for you. Sekomi was the chief of the Bamangwato, a tribe among whom Dr. Livingstone was doing missionary service. One day, sitting by him in the hut, Sekomi, addressing the missionary by a pompous title, said, "I wish you would change my heart. Give me medicine to change it, for it is proud, proud and angry, angry always." Dr. Livingstone lifted up

* "Personal Life of David Livingstone," by Dr. W. G. Blakie, p. 250.

the New Testament, and was about to tell him of the only way in which the heart can be changed, but Sekomi interrupted him, saying, "Nay, I will have it changed by medicine to drink, and have it changed at once, for it is always very proud and very uneasy and continually angry with some one." And then he rose and went away.* But this longing for some surprising "medicine" is not a longing always so distant from even Christian hearts. Having received the new birth by faith in Christ, when it comes to working the new birth out and through the whole nature, how do they long for some "medicine" of change of place or helping circumstance to do it for them; how do they recoil from daily and deadly personal grapple with infesting sins. But it is *your own* salvation which *you* must work out. You are the man to do it. Even in unfavorable circumstances you must not let the working cease. When Paul was with them, streaming them through with his strong in-

* "Personal Life of David Livingstone," by Dr. W. G. Blakie, p. 47.

fluence, it was perhaps easier for these Philippians to go on working their salvation out. But now that he was away from them and prisoner, their duty did not cease. Still it was their duty, their *own* duty. "Wherefore, my beloved," adjures the Apostle, "as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but *now much more in my absence*, work out your own salvation."

So much for the Duty, then. This Working is a duty, because there is such large service to be done, because such working toward the salvation of sanctification is the only genuine proof that I have by faith received the salvation of redemption, because such Working is a duty personal, and can not be delegated.

Second. A Method: Work. In order to work you must have instruments. Here, then, is lifted before us the value and necessity of the instruments of working, namely, *the means of grace.*

Prayer is such a means.

"Who goes to bed and doth not pray,
Maketh two nights of ev'ry day,"

George Herbert sings; and what he sings is true. Spiritual night falls where the sun of constant prayer does not arise. As helpless as is any seed toward growth is the soul defrauding itself of the vigor which comes from prayer. "Bene orasse bene studuisse"—to have prayed well is to have studied well, Luther used to say. But prayer must not simply water the roots of study, but the roots of every other activity of the soul as well. Prayer bathes the soul in God's sunlight. It brings it into contact with His help.

The Bible is such a means. "I read the whole Bible through four times whilst I was in Manguema,"* writes David Livingstone in his diary. And it was the Bible only which could have nurtured such magnificent Christian living as he illustrated in those dark wilds of Africa. And what he needed

* "Personal Life of David Livingstone," by Dr. W. G. Blakie, p. 403.

to work out his salvation by, we need as surely. The nutriment of the new life is truth. We get on so little in our high duty of becoming the Christly men and women we ought, because, feeding our souls with God's truth so slightly, we keep them in such famine.

The public worship of the sanctuary is such a means. Who does not need uplift? Who is not conscious of the numbing influence of the humdrum daily duty? Who does not feel the necessity for a break in the tense attention toward the earthly which business compels? In the prayers and praises and instructions of the sanctuary there is both rest from such things and stimulus for the higher nature.

The prayer-meeting is such a means. "There they that fear the Lord speak often one to another; and the Lord hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is written before him for them who fear the Lord and who think upon his name." *

The Lord's Supper is such a means. At

* Malachi iii. 16.

which, in significant symbol, we declare that, just as our physical existence hangs helplessly upon food and drink, so do our souls depend on Him whom broken loaf and poured-out wine forthtell; at which we renew to Him our consecration.

But, further, as to Method: Using all various instruments, we are to work out our own salvation *with fear and trembling;* that is to say, not self-confidently, but dependently. For there are enemies enough; the world, the flesh, the devil, are vigilant and persistent. And then, besides, we are to be in holy fear and sensitive tremulousness lest we offend our Helper. When Ignatius, the aged pastor of the church at Antioch, was brought before Trajan, the haughty and victorious, the Emperor called him contemptuously a *κακοδαίμων,* a poor devil. But Ignatius caught at the word, and replied manfully that one who bore God in him could not be called a devil, seeing that demons depart from the servants of God. "Who is it," asked Trajan, "who carries God with him?" Ignatius answered, "He

that hath Christ in his heart." "Do you mean," said Trajan, "Him that was crucified?" "Him that hath crucified my sin," said Ignatius, "with the inventor of it, and put down all demoniac error and wickedness under the feet of those who bear Him in their heart." "Dost thou, then," sneered Trajan, "carry the Crucified One within thyself?" "Yea," replied Ignatius; "for it is written, I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Thereupon the Emperor pronounced sentence: "We ordain that Ignatius, who says that he bears the Crucified within him, be flung to the beasts for the amusement of the people." And so Ignatius came to be called *Θεοφόρος*, the God-bearer, because he spoke of his carrying Christ in him. And while Ignatius would not himself have claimed it as a title, what he said to the proud Emperor shows that he did believe the Scripture truth, and "that he looked on every Christian man as one who bore God within him, whether he was mindful of his high and awful privilege or not."* "Grieve not the

* "The Fall of Man," and other sermons, by Canon Farrar, p. 283.

Holy Spirit of God."* "Quench not the Spirit."† And so with fear and trembling lest ye grieve or quench Him, work out your salvation.

Third. An Encouragement—For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. What encouragement! In our struggling workings we are not left unhelped. We are immersed in and transfused with the Divine assistance. It is not a meagre or measured aid of which the Apostle speaks. He does not limit the Divine operation. "Notice," as another has pointed out, "how his words seem picked on purpose to express most emphatically its all-pervading energy. Look how his words seem picked on purpose to express with the utmost possible emphasis that all which a good man is and does is its fruit. It is God that *worketh in* you. That expresses more than bringing outward means to bear upon heart and will. It speaks of an inward, real,

* Ephesians iv. 30.

† Thessalonians v. 19.

and efficacious operation of the Indwelling Spirit of all energy on the spirit in which He dwells. 'Worketh in you *to will.*' This expresses more than the presentation of motives from without: it points to a direct action on the will, by which impulses are originated within; God puts in you the first faint notions of a better will. 'Worketh in you, *doing* as well as willing.' This points to all practical obedience, to all external acts, as flowing from His grace in us, no less than all inward thoughts and holy desires." * God's help wraps me round and streams me through.

And now I am not going to mystify myself with difficult distinctions as to just where God's working ceases, if it cease at all, and mine begins; as to just how much I must work and God will work. I can use the encouragement of this great Scripture to much better purpose. I can use it practically, and let misty theorizing alone. *I* must work—I am sure of that; consciousness as well as Scripture tells me that. But,

* Maclaren's Sermons, First Series, p. 214.

like the sunlight falling down upon the seed in spring, comes *God's* benignant, surrounding, interpenetrating, vivifying help; and so I need not work hopelessly, I need not work fearing defeat. I work, but God works also; *so I must triumph.*

There is a hymn of the Greek patriarch Anatolius, set to sweet English music by John Mason Neale, which, it seems to me, tells, under the figure of the disciples straining at the oar on Galilee and of Christ's help, the whole truth of our work and God's, and of the high courage we may have and certainty of victory:

'Fierce was the wild billow,
Dark was the night:
Oars labor'd heavily;
Foam glimmer'd white;
Mariners trembled;
Peril was nigh;
Then said the God of gods,
'Peace! it is I.'

"Ridge of the mountain wave,
Lower thy crest;
Wail of Euroclydon,
Be thou at rest!

Peril can none be—
Sorrow must fly—
Where saith the Light of light,
'Peace! it is I.'

"Jesu, Deliverer!
Come Thou to me;
Soothe *Thou* my voyaging
Over life's sea!
Thou, when the storm of death
Roars sweeping by,
Whisper, O Truth of truth!
Peace! it is I.'"

CHAPTER VI.

THE SONS OF GOD.

THE Apostle gives to these Philippian Christians a very exalted title. He calls them the Sons, or, as the New Version has it, the Children of God.*

And yet this is not an unusual title in the Scripture.

Speaking of God's long-suffering, loving and at last triumphant grace, the prophet Hosea declares—"And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the Sons of the living God."†

In the first chapter of John's Gospel we are told whose right it is to wear this select

* Philippians ii. 15.

† Hosea i. 10.

title, and how they come by it—"But as many as received him, to them gave he power *or right* to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"; and then their illustrious pedigree is traced—"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." *

Also, in the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle gives a characteristic of those who dwell in this high realm, a kind of inner test by which they may try themselves—"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God." †

Then, besides, in Romans, in a strange, dim passage, it is hinted that all the lower world of the animal creation is in a kind of struggle and longing for the flashing forth of the real glory of these select and lifted ones, that it may gain blessing from such sunrise—"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the Sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by

* John i. 12, 13.

† Romans viii. 14.

reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the Children of God." *

Then, again, in one of John's Epistles, God's love in the bestowment of such a title calls forth the beloved disciple's thankful praise—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God." †

Still, again, in a succeeding passage of the same Epistle, the thought of the Apostle runs on to imagine, in some poor, faint way at least, the wondrous harvest and issue which must lie wrapped in such a wondrous seed—"Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." ‡

Very regal and surprising, then, according to the Scripture, in Dignity and Destiny, are these Sons of God.

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* Romans viii. 19, 20, 21, Revised Version.

† 1 John iii. 1. ‡ 1 John iii. 2.

And, if we ask who these Sons of God may be, I think, perhaps, that passage in John's Gospel may best tell us; they are those who have *received* Him, who have believed on the name of Jesus;* or, to use for them the designation first given to the saints in Antioch, the Sons of God are Christians. The man who has joined himself by faith to Jesus Christ, who has become in this vital way of assent of intellect to Christ and of consent of heart to Him a Christian—he is a Son of God in the peculiar, special, intimate, dignified, glorified sense of Scripture.

But now, among all the passages variously describing the Sons of God, I have not yet adduced this one in the Philippians. It is a very important one, indeed. It gives us a vision of the Sons of God from still another point of view. The passages already quoted tell of the grace and love of God in lifting sinful men into such Sonship; of the path of faith along which the soul must tread to enter it; of the inner test of the leading Holy Spirit which belongs to it; of a world

* John i. 12.

of lower creaturehood longingly waiting for the glory which shall flood it when the full reward and dignity of such Sonship is manifested forth; of the ultimate and radiant fruitage of such Sonship, even personal and beatific likeness with the Christ himself;—but this passage in the Epistle to the Philippians throws added and other light on the sons of God. It is the great Apostle's *outline sketch of what sort of people, in this present evil world, the Sons of God should be:*

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."*

This, then, is the kind of people, in this present evil world, the Sons of God should be—they should be unmurmuring; they should be without disputings; they should be blameless; they should be harmless; they should be without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; they

* Philippians ii. 14, 15, 16.

should shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

Briefly, now, and one by one, let us think together of these elements of this inspired description of the Sons of God.

First, the Sons of God should be *free from Murmuring;*—do all things without murmurings.

And this word *do* is a wide and including one. It takes in both the active and the passive sides of life. There are many things in life which we must do actively; for example, the daily duty, the daily business, the daily tasks. There are many things also in life which we must do passively, that is, we must suffer their doing upon ourselves, we must endure them; for example, the thorns in the flesh, the, what seem to us, mal-adjustments of Providence, the harassments and attritions of circumstance which we can neither mend nor much alter. Now, a Son of God is to do all things, both in the sense of actively accomplishing and of passively enduring without murmuring.

Murmuring—in the first Epistle to the

Corinthians, in the tenth chapter and at the tenth verse, the Apostle turns us back to the old Israelites, that we may get example of it: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." You remember how it was. Those old Hebrews were great at murmuring. On the thither edge of their miraculous deliverance the Egyptians pursue them —and they murmur. They come to a fountain; the water is bitter—and they murmur. Again, there is no water—and they murmur. Then there is no flesh with their bread—and they murmur. Then, when the quails have come and the bread is gone and the wonderful manna takes its place, there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes, they say—and they murmur. Moses tarries in the mount—and they murmur. Moses takes too much upon him—and they murmur. The way is long—and they murmur. They are at the borders of Canaan, the spies report the inhabitants giants and their towns walled;* but instead of trust-

* "Moses, the Man of God," by James Hamilton D.D., p. 223.

ing God a little, and attempting at least somewhat in His name, they refuse to attempt anything at all—and murmur. A crowd of grumblers—that is what they were. The splendid light of the Divine presence they used but to get sight of things at which they could carp and criticise.

Murmuring—let us define it. It means literally to mutter, to growl, to grumble. And so it gets to mean to utter complaints in a low, half-articulate voice. And then it passes over into the common moral meaning which we give it—the utterance of a willful, sullen discontent. As another has thoughtfully said, murmuring is a kind of moral rebellion against God.

Murmuring—let us be honest with ourselves, and confess that we have been learners too sadly apt in the bad school in which these old Israelites are teachers. And let us remember, too, that as with them, so with ourselves, murmuring is apt to break out more at smaller and special matters than at the larger and overarching. I suppose those old Israelites were, in a general way, really

very thankful and praiseful for their great deliverance—but it was at the little and passing things, the bitterness of March, the failure of water just then and there, the monotonousness of the manna, the apparently needlessly long tarrying of Moses in the mount that their murmurings broke out. This is the case, too, with our murmurings. There is many a man who is really very thankful for his home—who really loves his wife devotedly, who would willingly put himself to much trouble and sacrifice on her account, who yet clips the wings of her spirits and shadows constantly the home sunshine by continual complaints at the little things which will sometimes get at sixes and sevens in the best-regulated household. There is many a man greatly thankful at his general prosperity who yet thinks he has a perfect right to grumble at the washing-day dinner—as Dr. James Hamilton has put it—under one cover nothing but manna and under the other only quails.* There

* "Moses, the Man of God," by James Hamilton, D.D., p. 221.

are many parents who bear most generous and fervid love toward their children, who are yet so constant in their murmurs at childish spirits and childish noises and childish fun and childish carelessness, that the home becomes a kind of prison, and the child loves the street better. There is many a church-member who is really very thankful to God for his place in Christ's Church, who values it highly, who shows his love by constant and steady and difficult service, who yet, because he does not get his special plan, or get it by his special method, or because others do not do precisely as he thinks they ought, or because others in this or that little particular think he does not do just as he ought—changes, at least a little, the music of brotherhood into the discords of complaints.

Murmurers too much are most of us—if not generally rebellious, if on the whole thankful and submissive, yet still, in this and that, and that minuter and particular thing, where the harness hurts, where the burden presses, where the pin-prick pains, are we

apt to growl and grumble and mutter, are we apt to murmur.

But now, in Paul's sketch here of what a Son of God should be, this is the first thing he tells us about him—a Son of God should not murmur. Let the Son of God do all things without murmurings, he said. In this growling rebellion toward the appointments of his Heavenly Father, even though it be about the slighter things, the Son of God may not allow himself. That is the trouble—we do not think enough of murmuring as a *sin*. We call it a peccadillo, or an infelicity of disposition, or a kind of pardonable outlet for the devil in us. We are apt to think that, because we do not break the commandments as a whole, we have a perfect right to knock the edges off here and there by little grunts of murmuring. But, according to the Scripture, murmuring is a sin. It is sinfully unbecoming a Son of God. If my boy is generally obedient, and then pouts and flouts because I want him to do some little thing, or because, for wise reasons, I say he must endure some little

thing, the general obedience does not excuse the special disobedience. Since he is my son, and I try to be the best father to him I know how, he ought not to mutter and refuse at that slighter thing. And since I, by faith in Christ, have become a Son of God, since He by His grace has lifted me into this grand dignity and destiny of Sonship, and since He, not tries to be, but is the best possible Father, appointing wisely and arranging lovingly minuter things as well as larger—then even at these minuter things I have no right to be growlingly rebellious. Murmuring is sinfully unbecoming a Son of God.

Second. A Son of God is to do all things *without disputings*. These disputings do not refer so much to wranglings among brethren, as to doubtful, wavering, inward, intellectual questionings toward God. Dr. Lightfoot, whose commentary is perhaps the authority on Philippians, says as murmuring is the moral, so disputing is the intellectual rebellion against God.* Thus inter-

* Lightfoot on Philippians, *in loco*.

preted, this word disputing yields a most beautiful and consistent meaning. A Son of God may not have inward questionings about his Heavenly Father. He is not to doubt Him. He is a man who is to walk by faith in Him.

I read once about a ship-captain who was out for three long nights in a continued storm. He was close by the harbor, yet of himself he could not venture to go in, and the sea was so rough the pilot could not come aboard. He dare trust nobody but himself. He stood nobly at the helm. Endurance almost gave way, but he stood there. Imagine his disputings, his inward questionings with himself—how near he might be to the rocks mist-covered, to what limit he might run on this tack or that, whether this were the best thing to do or that, or that. Worn with anxiety, worn with toil, worn with care for crew and cargo, almost at the point of giving up and taking the chances of letting the vessel drift to safety or to wreck—at length, over the rough sea and through the mist he saw the

pilot coming. Climbing the deck, almost without a word the pilot went to the helm and took it. Then immediately for that captain disputings, inward questionings, all the anxious wrench and strain ceased utterly. The pilot was at the helm. The pilot knew; the pilot was responsible. The captain, leaving matters in his hand, and with heart at rest, went below for food and sleep.

Now, a Son of God has put himself over into the guidance and guarding of the Heavenly Father. He has resigned the helm of his destiny into His hands. God is his pilot. So a Son of God is not to have disputings—waverings, wondering, anxious inward questionings. He is to rest in God. He is to be quiet in Him. He is to be strong and constant in courage in Him. The best cure for murmurings, you see, is to be without disputings in this meaning.

Third. A Son of God should *be blameless.* But this does not mean, in any sense, that he is to be a pallid, soft, negative, interrogation-point kind of character; a man who

amounts to so little, that to know where he is or what he does is hardly worth asking about. To be a Son of God is not to want back-bone, it is to have back-bone. A Son of God is to be blameless in this strong and noble sense, that he is to so carry himself, in such grand accord with his profession as a Son of God, that not the most critical worldling can, for any just reason, find fault with him; can, for any real cause, say he does not act like a Son of God.

As to be unmurmuring and without disputing has reference to his attitude Godward, so this enjoined blamelessness has reference to his attitude manward.

Scotch Dean Ramsay tells a story of a little boy who was told of heaven and of the meeting of the departed there. "And will faather be there?" the little fellow asked. On being told that of course he would be there, the child at once broke out, "Then I'll no gang." By no means a blameless Son of God could have been that orthodox Scotch Christian to have made such illustration of religion in the vision of his child.

Think how careful Paul was to be blameless. You remember that he was often much occupied in gathering and conveying contributions from the richer Gentile churches for the help of the poor saints at Jerusalem. Dean Howson has called special attention to the exquisite scrupulousness of the Apostle in these matters. "Commissioners were chosen *by the churches themselves* to take charge of the contributions. 'When I come,' he writes to the Corinthians, 'whomsoever *ye* shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry *your* charitable gift to Jerusalem; and if it be thought right, they shall go with me.'* And what was done at Corinth was done elsewhere. In the second Epistle he mentions one who was expressly associated with Titus in this office, and 'chosen *by the churches* in regard to this charitable gift then in process of ministration.'† Nor was all this cautious and delicate management unnecessary; for it seems that both he and Titus had been

* 1 Corinthians xvi. 3, 4.

† 2 Corinthians viii. 19.

exposed to the vulgar charge of seeking their own profit in this charitable work.* So that there was very good reason, as there always is in such transactions, for shunning even the semblance of interested motives. We should observe Paul's own statement: 'Carefully avoiding, lest any man should blame us in dealing with so large a sum';† and the Apostle strengthens this by a quotation which he *twice* makes from the Book of Proverbs: 'Providing things honest, in the sight, not only of the Lord, but of men';‡ in other words, 'exercising' himself to maintain a 'conscience,' not only in great things, but in small things—not only in fact, but in appearance—'void of offence toward God and toward men.'§"‖

Will you specially notice that when the Apostle found himself subjected to this mean and miserable charge of winning a

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* 2 Corinthians xii. 18. † 2 Corinthians viii. 20.

‡ Proverbs iii. 4. See Romans xii. 17.

§ Acts xxiv. 16.

‖ "The Character of St. Paul," by Dean Howson, pp. 164, 166.

personal advantage, making a good thing for himself out of this collection for the poor saints, he did not get angry, and declare he would wash his hands of the whole matter and resign, and let the poor saints in Jerusalem suffer because evil-minded and censorious persons went about saying such unfounded and unjust things about him? That would have been the natural thing to do, but that was not the Christian thing. No; Paul would do the beautiful, Christly duty, and, in addition, he would anxiously see to it that even the mouths of such scandal-making persons should be stopped by his careful conduct. He would keep on doing beneficently as a Christian ought, and in the doing it he would be blameless and be seen to be.

Many times people say, "I don't care what others think about me or say about me; I am utterly indifferent; let their tongues wag." But so a Son of God may not say. First of all, a Son of God is to be solicitously scrupulous that there be really nothing in his conduct which may give just

occasion for criticising speech; and next, he is to seek, by all right means of thoughtful care, to baffle and beat down what may be of bad report by good report. He is to be blameless.

Fourth. A Son of God should *be harmless.* As to be unmurmuring and without disputings tells of the right attitude of a Son of God upward and toward God, and as to be blameless tells of the right attitude of a Son of God outward and toward men, so this designation *harmless* tells of the right attitude of a Son of God inward and toward himself. This word harmless means, literally, unmixed, unadulterated, and so it comes to mean pure, sincere. It is the word used in Greek literature of pure wine, of unalloyed metal. The Son of God in himself should be sincere and honest and without pretense. The New Version brings the meaning nobly out in its translation of a portion of the Sermon on the Mount. The old version reads, "Take heed that ye do not your *alms* before men to be seen of

them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." The new translates, "Take heed that ye do not your *righteousness* before men"; and then it goes on to specify the sorts of righteousness which are to be done sincerely, as for the Father's eye, and not insincerely, for the eyes of men—the righteousness of alms, the righteousness of prayer, the righteousness of fasting. A Son of God is to be a man of the purest inward motive. He is not to do his righteousness that men may praise him for it, but because it is right to do it, and as in the vision of the Supreme. A Son of God is not to be gilding—to his heart's core he is to be gold. He is to be harmless—that is to say, he is to be unmixed sincere.

Fifth. A Son of God is *to be greater than his circumstances*—without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. That is to say, *even though* he is in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation he is to be without rebuke. He is not to share the crookedness and perverseness. He is

not to say, being in Rome, I must do as the Romans do. Rather everywhere, as far as character is concerned, he is to be mightier than his circumstances; he is to be and he is to act like a Son of God. Said Luther to Erasmus, "You desire to walk on eggs without crushing them, and among glasses without breaking them." Answered the trimming, timorous Erasmus to Luther, "I will not be unfaithful to the cause of Christ, *at least so far as the age will permit me.*" Of such sort is no speech for a Son of God—the utterance of a craven thrall of his time and circumstance. "I treasure," says one, "a small drawing by Millais. It is the figure of a woman bound fast to a pillar far within tide-mark. The sea is curling its waves about her feet. A ship is passing in full sail, but not heeding her or her doom. Birds of prey are hovering about her; but she heeds not the birds or the ship or the sea. Her eyes look right on and her feet stand firm, and you see that she is looking directly into heaven, and telling her soul how the sufferings of this present time are not worthy

to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. Under the picture is this legend, copied from the stone set up to her memory in an old Scottish kirkyard :

> " 'Murdered for owning Christ supreme
> Head of His Church, and no more crime,
> But for not owning Prelacy,
> And not abjuring Presbyt'ry,
> Within the sea, tied to a stake,
> She suffered for Christ Jesus' sake.'" *

This is the right method for a Son of God —amid the rising waves and notwithstanding them, true to the truth, and so master of the waves though they overwhelm.

Sixth. A Son of God should *be like a luminary streaming heaven's radiance into the world's darkness ;*—among whom ye shine, or are seen, as lights in the world holding forth the Word of Life. As hands do torches or as beacons fling forth their light to point out harbor to storm-tossed sailors, a Son of God is to shine and to hold forth his shining.

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* See Macaulay's thrilling description of the scene History of England, vol. ii., p. 89.

You remember the familiar story:

A traveler once visiting the lighthouse at Calais, said to the keeper, "But what if one of your lights should go out at night?" "Never—impossible!" he cried. "Sir, yonder are ships sailing to all parts of the world. If to-night one of my burners were out, in six months I should hear from America, or India, saying that on such a night the lights at Calais lighthouse gave no warning, and some vessel had been wrecked. Ah, sir, sometimes I feel, when I look upon my lights, as if the eyes of the whole world were fixed upon me. Go out! burn dim! Never! impossible!" That is close to our Scripture.

On the Eddystone lighthouse is this inscription: "To give light and to save life"—this is close to our Scripture. A Son of God is to shine, and by shining hold forth the Word of Life—the Word which saves.

He is to shine by constantly keeping himself in contact with the light-giving agency. His light is derived always. "Our lamps are going out," said the foolish virgins in

the parable, and the lights were flickering down because the oil was wanting. A Son of God can be a luminary only as he steadily receives from Christ the oil of His grace and help. A prayerless Christian can not shine—he has no oil. A Bible-neglecting Christian can not shine—he has no oil. A means-of-grace-neglecting Christian can not shine—he has no oil. It is only as a Son of God receives that he can shine. He has no light inherent; he can but ray forth light imparted.

In his Business he is to shine; the radiance is to flash along his bargains and his ledgers.

In his Home he is to shine; in the mild lustre of a Christian character all the home inmates are to rejoice, *all* the home inmates —the lustre is not to be kept simply for the parlor, it is even to stream into the kitchen.

In his Friendships he is to shine; in other days I used to meet so shining a saint, that simply to have heard "Good-morning" from him was like the breaking of a sunbeam into a cloudy day.

In his Church he is to shine; he may not be gloomy with complaint, and harsh as an east wind with criticism, and when he is wanted for a duty pettishly refusing, leaving, where he should be, but a dark emptiness; but like a day in June he should seek to be, a day into which the clouds come not, tender with a genial sunshine, in whose presence the most timid flowers find courage to put out the colors of their petals and scatter their best fragrance forth.

So shining, others must say of such a Son of God, as even the proud Sanhedrim were compelled to say of those Sons of God of the early time, "He has been with Jesus and learned of Him"; and to make men think of Jesus is to hold forth the word of life.

Such, then, is Paul's sketch of what a Son of God should be in this present evil world.

As you look at it, learn this single lesson —to be a Christian, a Son of God is not simply *to have had* an experience, shriveled now and faded, and laid away in the drawers of the memory; to be a Son of God is not simply to have been, it is to be; it is to have

a present life blooming out of an experience; it is to live unmurmuringly, trustfully, blamelessly, sincerely, without rebuke even amid difficult and tempting circumstance, shiningly holding forth the Word of Life.

CHAPTER VII.

TIMOTHY.

THE Apostle has just been sketching what sort of people the Sons of God should be in this present evil world. Immediately now he brings an argument and a reason why these Philippian Christians should be steadily intent on themselves becoming such Sons of God. The reason is that their failure to be such would be, in a sense, his own disappointment and defeat. "Be such Sons of God," he says, "that I may have to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain, neither labor in vain."* It is as if he had said: "Into you, O Philippians, I have put my prayers, my work, my life; through my effort, by God's good grace, you have been rescued from heathenism and translated into the kingdom of His

* Philippians ii. 16, Revised Version.

dear Son; now be worthy of that kingdom, that in Christ's day of adjudication I may be full of joy because of you, and it may be seen that my work for you and in you has not been naught."

There is no pain so bitter as that which thrusts its pangs through a minister when those for whom he has wrought, to whom he has given the best service he knew, falter and fail and stain the ermine of their high profession. Nor is there any joy so sweet as that which wells up in the heart of a minister when he sees those whom he has brought to Christ, and over whom he has been given care, constant to their Lord as is the needle to the pole. It is a great thing to look upon a growing and beautiful Christian character, with whose beginnings and nurture you, under God's blessing, have had something to do, and be able to say: "See! there is one result of my toil, anyway; I have not lived uselessly; I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

And then, as the Apostle, longing by his personal presence to edify and help these

loved Philippians, reverts to his present imprisoned and hindered plight, and thinks how it is quite possible that, notwithstanding his hopes otherwise, his captivity may end in martyrdom—he bursts forth: "Yea, and if I am poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all; and in the same manner do ye joy, and rejoice with me"*—yea, if I be destined to martyrdom, if it shall so turn out, in God's ordering, that my death shall be better for you than my life, I will rejoice in death; and since dying I shall best serve you, I bid you rejoice also in my dying. His whole heart and soul are theirs, whether it be for life or death.

Then, further, as the Apostle, held here a prisoner, hampered and prevented, is yet yearning to do his utmost for those to whom his heart so cleaves, and is trying to find something he can do for them, he bethinks himself that there is one thing left for him,

* Philippians ii. 17, 18, Revised Version, marginal reading.

and possible. Here is Timothy, his own son in the Gospel, his companion in labor, the delight of his heart, the stay of his age —he can send him to these Philippians to do for them the personal ministry from which he is himself thwarted. Just as soon as he shall get a little more light on what is coming to him out of this imprisonment, just as soon as Timothy can be in any wise spared, he will send them him. And so he writes, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you." *

This mention of Timothy brings at once to our notice one of the most prominent and beautiful and inspiring characters of the New Testament. Let us study the lovely life, and gather some of the lessons with which it is wealthy. Biography is always valuable; most of all, Scriptural biography. For, after all, nothing can help life like life. The Arabian proverb says, "A fig-tree looking on a fig-tree becometh fruitful."

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* Philippians ii. 19.

On Paul's first evangelizing journey, you will remember, when, together with Barnabas, set apart to missionary duty by the church at Antioch, the two went forth upon it;* passing through the island of Cyprus, and thence reaching Perga in Pamphylia, and thence Antioch in Pisidia, and thence Iconium, they came to Lystra.* You will remember that Lystra was the scene of the healing of the man impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb. On his healing, the people exclaimed that, in the persons of the two strangers, the gods Jupiter and Mercury had come down to them, and were proceeding to pay them divine honors, which Paul with difficulty prevented.† The presence of Paul and Barnabas made much religious stir in that city; a number of disciples were gathered. Then, you will remember, that, moved by certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, the temper of these Lystrians changed, and they set on Paul with stones, and dragged him out of

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* Acts xiii. 1, 3. † Acts, chapters xiii. and xiv

the city, and left him lying there dead, as they supposed. But he was not dead. As the converts watched around him, he recovered consciousness, and went back into the city, and getting rest and receiving refreshment from those who had believed, went on next day to Derbe.*

Though there is no direct mention of it, yet, putting everything together,† it is most probable that on this first missionary journey, and here in this place of cruel stoning, Paul first met Timothy, and was himself the means of his conversion.‡

Sometimes amid our worst trials God gives us our best blessings. Here in this stony Lystra sprung up for Paul the beautful and refreshing fountain of Timothy. In more ways than one is that ancient Scripture true, 'For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."§

At the time of his conversion Timothy was

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* Acts xiv. 8, 20. † See 2 Timothy iii. 11.

‡ Paul calls him his own son in the faith (1 Timothy i. 2).

§ Isaiah xxxv. 6.

a youth, probably in the neighborhood of fifteen years of age.*

Well, some seven years † have sped away, and Paul is again at Lystra. He is now upon his *second* great evangelizing journey.

Attend a little to what has been taking place meantime. From his first journey Paul has returned to Antioch, and given to the church there account of the Lord's doings through himself and Barnabas. Tarrying at Antioch a good while, and plying here his ministry, there breaks out all that discussion about the relation of the Mosaic ritual to the new Covenant: whether now in the new Covenant that ancient ritual is to be dispensed with, or whether a man must not only believe in Christ, but also be circumcised and observe the other Jewish rites in order to be saved. You know very well the side which Paul always took upon

* Farrar's "Life of St. Paul," vol. i., p. 386; also Lewin's "Life of St. Paul," vol. i., p 166, vol. ii., p. 349.

† Dr. William Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, article Timothy.

this question—the great dividing question for the early Church. The discussion culminates in the Council at Jerusalem, which Paul attends, and at which it is decided that Christ alone is Saviour, that ancient rites are no longer binding, that there are only these necessary things pertaining to the new life in Christ—that converts abstain from meats offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, from fornication. Paul then returns again to Antioch, bearing, together with messengers from Jerusalem, the decree of the Council to the church at Antioch.

Then, after a time, Paul proposes to Barnabas to go upon this second missionary tour, visiting again the churches founded in the first. Barnabas agrees; but at once there is a split and quarrel on the question as to whom they shall take with them. You see, there were such things as very heated disagreements even in the early and Apostolic Church. They were not perfect people they were, as we are, imperfect people struggling toward perfection. Mark had gone with Paul and Barnabas on the first

journey, and Barnabas wanted to take him the second time. But Paul remembered that on that first journey Mark had gotten frightened and turned coward and gone home. He would not consent to Mark's company again. So Barnabas and Paul separate: Barnabas taking Mark and going one way, and Paul taking Silas and going another. And thus it was that, prosecuting this second missionary journey, and after seven years have sped away, Paul, in company now with Silas, comes again to Lystra.*

In the account of this second evangelizing tour the first direct mention is made of Timothy. We are told several things about him. We are told of his mother,† that she was by race a Jewess, but had become a Christian. In Paul's second letter to Timothy we are given her name, it was Eunice.‡ We are there also told of Timothy's grandmother, that her name was Lois, and that she also was a Christian.§ Timothy's father

* See Acts, chapters xiv. and xv.

† Acts xvi. 1. ‡ 2 Timothy i. 5. § Ditto.

is mentioned, too, in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts, where he himself comes first directly into view. All we know of him is that he was a Greek, the strong intimation seeming to be that he was not a believer in the Lord Jesus.* Of Timothy himself we are told that he was already a disciple—the probability being, as I have just been saying, that he became a Christian through Paul's labors on his first visit to this town of Lystra seven years before. We are also told of Timothy, that his Christian character was of the highest repute, not only among the brethren who lived at Lystra, but that the sweet savor of his name had extended as far as to Iconium.†

There was something in this young man which evidently drew to him in a marked manner the Apostle's heart. He seemed to the Apostle to be just the one he needed as a companion and assistant. Him, we are told, would Paul have to go forth with him.‡ At the close of one of his addresses as Pres-

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* Acts xvi. 1. † Acts xvi 2. ‡ Acts xvi. 3.

ident of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Dr. Boardman, of Philadelphia, tells us how, when his father, the missionary Boardman—and whose early death amid his Christian triumphs among the Karens is one of the most romantic and stirring incidents in missionary annals—made known to his father his purpose to give himself to the distant and difficult missionary service, that his father answered, amid his tears, that God could confer no higher honor upon himself than to consecrate a son of his to such a noble duty. I suppose it must have been in some such way that Timothy's mother must have felt and spoken when the call came for her son Timothy to go forth upon such hazardous and laborious pilgrimage with the Apostle Paul. With tears she bade him good-bye surely, and at the same time with a joyful, holy thankfulness that her boy was lifted to such stately place and service.

Since Timothy's father was a Greek, although his mother was a Jewess, and doubtless owing to his Gentile father's wishes and

prejudice, Timothy had never been caused to submit to the Jewish rite of circumcision. But Paul immediately saw to it that this Jewish rite was performed on Timothy.*

Yet, concerning Titus, we are told that this same Apostle would not allow him for any consideration to be circumcised.† The reason for this difference is most instructive. Regarding Titus, the matter assumed the shape of a *principle.* It was around Titus that the battle was just then waging between these, of whom Paul was one, who said that Christ was the alone Saviour, and that Jewish and ritualistic party who would keep on declaring Christ was Saviour *provided* those who believed on Him submitted themselves to Mosaic ceremonies. Here, in the case of Titus, a principle was at stake, and Paul would not yield a hair's breadth. But regarding Timothy, this matter of circumcision took the form simply of an *expediency.* No discussion was waked up about the thing. And Timothy was going with Paul on

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* Acts xvi. 3. † Galatians ii. 3.

a tour of evangelization. Week after week he would be entering Jewish synagogues to proclaim that in the despised Jesus of Nazareth all the Jewish Messianic hopes and prayers had been fulfilled and answered. In a Jew's eyes there was no disgrace so disgraceful as that a man with Jewish blood in him should be uncircumcised. If Timothy were to seek to talk to Jews thus they would not listen to him ; all their prejudices would be alert against him. It was, therefore, most expedient that Timothy should be circumcised. So, then, when it was a simple question of *expediency*, Paul yielded ; where it was a question of *principle*, Paul stood firm as the mountains about Jerusalem. It is a very essential part of the wise philosophy of life to distinguish thus between a matter of principle and a matter of expediency. To be obstinate concerning principle is to be right and heroic. To be obstinate concerning expediency is to be ridiculous and narrow and wrong-headed, and is likeliest to defeat the very end you have in view.

So, set apart and ordained to his great duty by the church at Lystra and by the Apostle himself,* Timothy, now a young man of twenty-two or twenty-three, or thereabouts, goes forth with the Apostle.

Thenceforward the lives of Paul and Timothy are intertwined. Timothy is toward Paul his most loved and trusted companion, sympathizer, helper, messenger, consoler.

It is not needful to trace further Timothy and Paul along their winding ways of evangelizing journeying.

When there is any special and delicate duty to be done, as, for example, at Corinth, to bring the churches into the remembrance of the ways† of the Apostle, Timothy is the one sent oftenest to do it. When the Apostle must hasten on, and the believers gathered in some city, as at Berea, need further edification and organization amidst embittered foes, it is to Timothy the duty is chiefly delegated.‡ When, as at Corinth,

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* 1 Timothy iv. 14; 2 Timothy i. 6, iv. 5.

† 1 Corinthians iv. 17. ‡ Acts xvii. 10, 11.

there is a long period of settled labor, Timothy is the Apostle's trusted helper.* When, as among the Thessalonians, the hearts of believers are sinking amid manifold tribulations, it is Timothy who is sent to establish them and to comfort them concerning their faith.† When the Apostle writes letters to the various churches, it is Timothy whose name the Apostle oftenest associates with his own. When the Apostle, as we now find him, is a prisoner at Rome, though we have no record of Timothy's presence with him during the long journey thither—probably he could not travel with him as a prisoner—it is Timothy who comes at once to Rome to identify himself with the Apostle, to be his rejoicing support and stay.‡ And it is of this true and steadfast friend Timothy, here with him at Rome, that the Apostle writes to these Philippian Christians his grand commendation:

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort

* Acts xviii. 5. † 1 Thessalonians iii. 2, 3
‡ Colossians i. 1; Philemon 1.

when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." But Timothy still was true. "But ye know"—the Apostle appeals to their knowledge of Timothy when he was with him and them at Philippi—"but ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it shall go with me."*

After the deliverance of the Apostle from this his first imprisonment at Rome, it is still Timothy who is his companion in much of his journeying.† Subsequently, the Apostle gave him oversight of the church at Ephesus. It is while he serves in this capacity that the Apostle addresses to him, from Macedonia, the letter we call the first Epistle to Timothy.‡

But soon the great Apostle's course is hastening to its close. In a little time he is seized and carried to Rome a prisoner a

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* Philippians ii. 19–23. † 1 Timothy i. 3.

‡ Conybeare and Howson, "Life of St. Paul," vol ii., p. 462.

second time.* It is amid the rigors of the great first general persecution under Nero. The first imprisonment was like a June day compared with the second, which was like an Arctic winter. To be known as Paul's friend now was a very serious and dangerous matter. It is too hazardous a thing for some who have hitherto called themselves his friends. Demas forsakes him. Cresens leaves him, too. Possibly even Titus fails in thorough friendship.† Only Luke stands faithful. And the aged Apostle yearns for Timothy. And so he writes to him what we know as the second Epistle to Timothy, urging him to come to him. There are most pathetic touches in this second Epistle —the last one we have from the hands of the Apostle. Paul is aged, and his prison is cold, and his covering scanty, and so he asks Timothy to be sure to bring the travelling cloak he left at Troas. Also he tells him to certainly bring as well the books and

* Conybeare and Howson, "Life of St. Paul," vol. ii., pp. 482, 491.

† 2 Timothy iv. 10.

parchments*—these will ease a little the tedium of his captivity.

If, as is the opinion of many scholars, we believe that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by Paul, but by some other hand, possibly by that of Barnabas or of Apollos, and shortly after the death of Paul,† we learn there how nobly Timothy, true to the last, responded to this call of Paul the aged. For in the thirteenth chapter of that Epistle and at the twenty-third verse the author says, "*Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty?*" So that Timothy came to Paul at Rome, and stood by him even to sharing his imprisonment, though at that time he misses Paul's fate, for Paul was slain. Afterwards, tradition says, Timothy himself met also a martyr's death at Ephesus.

And what kind of a man was this faithful, much-enduring, devoted Timothy? He had

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* 2 Timothy iv. 13.

† Conybeare and Howson, "Life of St. Paul," vol. ii., pp. 511, 516.

a constitution far from robust; he was not naturally a great, strong man, who could go through things by the sheer momentum of his sturdy health; for we read, Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.* He was not a man who easily and carelessly shouldered responsibility, he was naturally shrinking and retiring; for we read, Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.† He was not a man unsensitive, by the make of his disposition a pioneer; his was a tender, sensitive nature, whose nerves were quick and on the surface, and whose heart was wounded easily; for we read, How Paul reminds him that he is mindful of his tears.‡

Yet, notwithstanding such natural disposition, how strong and grand and brave and enduring a Christian this Timothy was, we have just been seeing.

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* 1 Timothy v. 23. † 2 Timothy ii. 1, 3.

‡ 2 Timothy i. 4.

I said this life of Timothy's was rich in important lessons. Let us attend to some of them.

Learn, first, *the value of a Christian Ancestry.* In his second Epistle, Paul writes to Timothy: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, in thee also."* Timothy entered upon his noble Christian character and service with two generations of religious ancestry behind him. Who shall say that this had no influence in making him the man he was? It did have influence. It could not but have influence. It is in accordance with a most profound Divine law that it should have. The law of heredity is a law and fact. Heredity is an enormous and subtle force, helping or hindering. We are not, indeed, because of a religious ancestry, born regenerate. But it is still true that the man budded from a religious stock is likelier to become

* 2 Timothy i. 5.

regenerate. It is a nurturing condition toward regeneration. It is what a southern exposure is to a plant or tree. It does not cause the tree, but it helps the tree. One of the most fearful thoughts concerning a man or woman who remains un-Christian is that such state renders less likely the becoming Christian of their children. So, also, how awful a thing is it to decide against Christ when the very strain in one's blood is a force toward Him. Be thankful for a Christian ancestry—it is one of God's best blessings. Beware of perverting so great a blessing.

Learn, second, *the power of a Christian motherhood.* In a very special and emphatic way the mother of Timothy is mentioned in the Scripture. She seems to be singled out as a peculiarly noble and religious woman. I am very sure it was in great degree because of the sort of woman Eunice was that Timothy became the sort of man he was. Paul tells us, as I have just mentioned, of her own *unfeigned* faith, and then, in another

part of the same second Epistle to Timothy he gives us a glimpse of Eunice's method of home-training. He charges Timothy: But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing *of whom* thou hast learned them; and that *from a child* thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.* Do we not here come upon the open secret of Timothy's pure and lofty character? A mother full of unfeigned faith herself, and then a mother brooding with this faith over her boy, and filling, prayerfully and constantly, his little mind with Holy Scripture, interfusing and compacting all his growing character with that. Nor did she have her husband to help her either. As far as we can find out, that household was like many now, sadly divided religiously—the mother a Christian, the father indifferent and careless, if not hostile. But the mother was faithful. And out of her faithful nurture what blessed fruitage

* 2 Timothy iii. 14, 15.

came. Her sphere restricted? Yes, it was. Woman's sphere was terribly restricted then. And, I think, when you read about and know of underpaid and tasked shop-girls, compelled to stand through the long hours, and to grab what bite of lunch they can behind the counters; and of their sisters, the sewing-girls, whose pale, pinched faces you can see in throngs any morning you traverse the streets of a great city early enough, you must feel it is too terribly restricted now. But, faithful to her God and faithful to the truth, what a glory Eunice made of even her restricted sphere—through Timothy.

O, if there be any true discouraged mother whose eye chances to fall upon these pages, who stands alone, whose husband does not help her a particle religiously, whose heart breaks at the thought of her unshared religious responsibility for her children — remember Timothy's mother, Eunice, and take courage, and in Christ's strength try to be like her. She who goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed,

shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing her sheaves with her.*

Learn, third, never to think *converted children* of small account. Timothy could not have been much beyond fifteen years of age, if, indeed, he was as old as that, when, through Paul's painstaking, he became a Christian. I have no doubt there were strong men converted there at Lystra—and the little company of believers looked up to them and depended on them and were very glad of them, as was most right. Quite likely, when it was rumored that Timothy also had given himself to Christ, those believers then—as sometimes do believers now, rejoicing over some maturer triumph—said, "O, that does not amount to much; it's only little Timothy." But the truth was, that child's conversion amounted to the most. He brought a whole life to Christ, while these older converts, strong men though they were, brought at best but fragments. And he developed into how vastly

* Psalm cxxvi. 6.

more than they. I remember when I was a boy I made a visit to New York, and went one rainy Sunday to the old First Baptist Church in Broome Street to listen to Kingman Nott. He was preaching from that text in Daniel's prophecy, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." Glancing upward to a lofty gallery, in which were seated some street-children gathered into the Sabbath-school, he said—and I have never forgotten it—"I would rather lead one of those little children to the Lord Jesus than be the emperor of the proudest realm." And it was a true thing to say. To do that is to do a mightier thing than to rule, simply in a worldly way. To do that is to save a whole life. There can be no better ambition for a minister. There can be no better ambition for a Sabbath-school teacher. There can be no better ambition for anybody. The best convert Paul won, as in the long run it turned out, was—only little Timothy.

Learn, fourth, *how careful we should be concerning those seeking introduction into the Christian ministry.* We are specially told concerning Timothy, whom Paul wanted to take with himself as a helper and companion in the ministry, that he was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.* I am sure Paul would not have taken him had he not won such good report. I am perfectly sure he knew Timothy through and through, and all about him, before he suggested his ordination. Afterward he specially charges Timothy to lay hands hastily on no man,† and writes to him in detail the sort of man a pastor ought to be.‡ When, as in some churches, and as ought to be the case in all, laymen together with ministers are called to serve upon ordaining councils, on the part of both ministers and laymen, concerning candidates for ordination, there ought to be the most stringent and investigating care. It should

* Acts xvi. 2.

† 1 Timothy v. 22, Revised Version.

‡ 1 Timothy iii. 1, 7.

make no difference what may chance to be the wish of the church calling the ordaining council or of the candidate seeking ordination. Because any one may be disappointed or feel badly is no reason why the solemn service should go heedlessly on. If there be not manifest fitness both in character and reputation and ability and culture on the part of the candidate for the sacred office, there should be kind, but at the same time most firm denial of his entrance on it. Irreparable harm has come again and again from too good-natured or easy-going ordaining councils. When men are transacting such momentous business for the King, it behooves them to do it in the most careful and worthy way. Obstruction, refusal, may perhaps be an unpleasant duty, but sometimes even a painful duty should be done.

Learn, fifth, *how the power of Christ can triumph over natural disposition.* You say you are not strong physically, and can not do much; Timothy was not, yet he did much. You say you are a man shrinking dispo-

sitionally from responsibility, and that, therefore, it can not be expected any weighty service should be laid upon your shoulders; Timothy was a man like you, yet he bore responsibility. You say you are sensitive, and so can not go forward in anything lest you should be hurt; Timothy was sensitive, yet he went pioneering.

But he did it all in the power of Christ. You can do immensely more than you think you can if you will but pray for and expect and dwell in His power.

Five thousand tired and hungry men, beside women and little children — what a throng to feed. "Send them away; we can not help them," say the disciples. "Give ye them to eat"; "What have you?" are Christ's command and question. "Five loaves"—and the loaves were but as soda crackers; "and two fishes"—and the fishes were but as herrings. "Bring them hither to me," the Master said. And they brought them. Ah, that was the secret, *they brought them.* And lo! when He had blessed, and when He break, the multitude were fed—

and there were twelve baskets full of fragments still. Learn the lesson. It is *the* lesson for the Christian life. You *are* too meagre and poor and little to do anything of yourself. But bring what you are and what you have to Christ, and behold, as for Timothy so for you, how great and grand and beneficent He can make, He *will make* your service.

CHAPTER VIII.

EPAPHRODITUS.

WRITING to these Philippians, the Apostle follows his mention of Timothy with immediate speech concerning Epaphroditus.

Of Timothy much is told us in the New Testament, as in the previous chapter we have just been seeing.

Of Epaphroditus there is no other light given than that which falls upon him from one or two brief cloud-breaks in this Epistle.

In the eighteenth verse of the fourth chapter, Paul writes: "But I have all things and abound; I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."*

* Revised Version.

You see, this Philippian church, of all the churches of Paul's planting, was the most attached to him, and the most thoughtful and timely in various beneficence. It was not as wealthy as were some other churches,* but, as Paul tells the Corinthians concerning them, their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.† I suppose this means, that everybody gladly gave something, and, so, a generous spirit pervading every one, even a comparative poverty outstripped the larger general wealth of other churches, where many were laggard and tight-fisted, and, touching giving, were depending on the few. Years before, when Paul was in Thessalonica, this Philippian church had sent once and again unto his need;‡ subsequently they had done likewise while he was toiling at Corinth;§ they have now heard that the Apostle is here in Rome, chained and in want, and their sweet mindfulness has not become less quick or

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* See 2 Corinthians viii. 2. † Ditto.

‡ Philippians iv. 16. § 2 Corinthians xi. 9

large—even as Paul tells them in this Epistle: "But I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now, at the last, your care of me hath flourished again."* As Dean Howson says: "The original expression thus translated is very beautiful. It reminds us of a tree, which, though it may have suffered in hard winters, and though it may have been severely handled by the axe, still lives, and sends out fresh and vigorous shoots."†

Now, the messenger appointed by the Philippian church to convey from Philippi, to the prisoner Paul at Rome, this latest offering, was Epaphroditus. He also was to carry back from the Apostle to these Philippians this Epistle.

What more is told us of him is in these words:

"Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was

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* Philippians **iv.** 10.

† "The Companions of St. Paul" by Dean Howson, p. 170.

full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him, therefore, the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him, therefore, in the Lord, with all gladness; and hold such in reputation; because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."*

That is, as another has explained this last clause: "That he might perform that part of the work of ministering to my need which you, from absence and distance, could not do; that he might represent you in that personal service toward me from which circumstances debarred you." †

And this is absolutely all we know about Epaphroditus. Like a wave upon the sea, he rises for a moment, with slight crest, and then sinks back forever into the indistinguishable waters. Yet he comes into our

* Philippians ii. 25, 30.

† "Lectures on the Philippians," by Dr. Vaughan. p. 169.

view long enough, I am sure, to suggest to us precious and helpful lessons about the Life in Christ.

Let us attend to some of them.

Consider, first, that we have here sketched for us, by the Apostolic hand, *the constituents of a most noble character.* It is thus Paul speaks of Epaphroditus: "My brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants."

My brother. In this constituent comes out the fact of the *great new unity* in Christ. Men had been fellow-citizens before, as in the days of the Roman Republic. Men were fellow-subjects, as now, in the days of the Roman Empire; held in a kind of external coherence by the grasp of an imperial power. But it was for Christianity to introduce, through common faith in a Saviour crucified for all, the profounder, intimate, vital tie of Brotherhood; so that in Christ Jesus there was neither Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; so that all relationships of

the more partial and outward sort were overswept by the overcoming and tidal one of unity in Christ, and thus of brotherhood with each other.

This was a fresh and surprising thing—this linking of brotherhood in Christ, running up from bond to free, and down from free to bond, and outward to different nationalities and to distant cities, chaining diverse race and position and culture into oneness. "Nothing more astonished the heathen, nothing was more incomprehensible to them: 'behold,' they exclaimed, 'how they love one another.' Among themselves Christians called each other Brethren, and this fraternal name was no mere word. They lived as Brethren. The Church was in reality one family, all its members children of one Heavenly Father. Each served each other; each prayed for all the rest. Even the stranger who came from far, if he but brought a letter of recommendation from his church, which certified him as a Christian, was received and treated as a brother. 'They love each other without knowing

each other,' says a pagan, in astonishment. This was, indeed, the most direct antithesis to the heathen saying, 'Man is a wolf to a man whom he does not know.'" *

Now, Epaphroditus was perfectly clad in the beauty of this Brotherhood. He comes from Philippi to the prisoned Paul, not the mere official carrier of a contribution, but with a heart at one with Paul's, and throbbing with the most Christly sympathy. Who can not see how like a stream of sunshine into a darkened day such a coming must have been? And this interplay of a most sweet fraternity between Paul and Epaphroditus and these Philippians, and back and forth and forth and back, glinting through the Scripture here, is most beautiful and touching. The brother-heart of Paul answers to the brother-heart of Epaphroditus, and when he is caught by sickness the heart of Epaphroditus goes out in anxious longing for his Philippian brothers—"For he longed after you all, and was full

* Ulhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," pp. 196–7.

of heaviness because that ye had heard that he had been sick," Paul writes; and Paul, too, is sympathizingly burdened with that sickness, and solicitous also concerning the anxiety of the Philippians on account of Epaphroditus; and the brother-heart of the Apostle kindles at the joy which he knows will warm the hearts of the Philippian brethren when Epaphroditus gets back to them safe and sound—as the Apostle writes again: "I have sent him, therefore, the more diligently, that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful." It is all one blessed and beautiful interchange and tangle of Brotherhood.

> "They share their mutual woes,
> Their mutual burdens bear:
> And often, for each other, flows
> The sympathizing tear."

Ah! this ability of Brotherhood is an ability great and gracious. Every Christian should seek to show it forth. It is one of the special fruits of the Holy Spirit. There is no grace which flings such light and

warmth along the paths of fellow-wayfarers through this sad world of ours. There is no grace which, with such charm, illustrates and magnifies our Lord Christ—for was not He brother? Icy, reserved, frowning, coldly criticising people Christians have no right to be. What a touch and hint of noble character—this about Epaphroditus, when Paul calls him, my Brother.

A clergyman sat in his study, busily engaged in preparing his Sunday sermon. His little boy toddled into the room, and holding up his pinched finger, said, "Look, pa, how I hurt it." The father, interrupted in the middle of a sentence, glanced hastily at him, and with just the slightest tone of impatience, said, "I can't help it, sonny." The little fellow's eyes grew bigger and wetter, and, as he turned to go out, he answered, in a low voice, "Yes, you could; you might have said, 'Oh!'" What a revelation of our heart-needs—the hurt child's speech, hurt in his finger and hurt in his heart, too. What a help, when you are pierced by pain, or aching under weights of

sorrow or of service, even if it be no more—the exclamation of a real sympathy from a brother's heart.

" If you have a friend worth loving,
Love him. Yes, and let him know
You love him, ere life's evening
Tinge his brow with sunset glow.
Why should good words ne'er be said
Of a friend—till he is dead?

" If you hear a song that thrills you,
Sung by any child of song,
Praise it. Do not let the singer
Wait deservèd praises long.
Why should one who thrills your heart
Lack the joy you may impart?

" If you hear a prayer that moves you
By its humble, pleading tone,
Join it. Do not let the seeker
Bow before his God alone.
Why should not your brother share
The strength of 'two or three' in prayer?

" If you see the hot tears falling
From a brother's eyes,
Share them. And, by sharing,
Own your kinship with the skies.
Why should any one be glad
When a brother's heart is sad?

"If a silvery laugh is rippling
Through the sunshine on his face,
Share it. 'Tis the wise man's saying—
'For both grief and joy a place.'
There's health and goodness in the mirth
In which an honest laugh has birth.

"If your work is made more easy
By a friendly helping hand,
Say so. Speak out brave and truly,
Ere the darkness veil the land.
Should a brother workman dear
Falter for a word of cheer?

"Scatter thus your seeds of kindness,
All enriching as you go;
Leave them. Trust the Harvest Giver,
He will make each seed to grow;
So, until life's happy end,
You shall never lack a friend."

The meaning of all which plainly is, that we should seek actively to illustrate this nobility and beneficence of Brotherhood. Let it be one of the purposes of our lives that many shall at least think of us, as Paul wrote of Epaphroditus—my Brother.

Companion in labor—another element in

this noble character. God works, but at second hand, through instruments—there is no wider-reaching principle of the Divine method. His energy urges on the great and conquering kingdom, not immediately, but mediately. God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, but through Moses. God drove out the inhabitants of the promised land, but through Joshua. God compacted the Hebrew nationality, but through David. God brought the wicked Ahab to terms and to destruction, but through Elijah. God brought back the exiled Israelites from Babylon, but through Cyrus and Ezra and Nehemiah. God broke the fetters of the Papacy from Europe, but through Luther and Melancthon and Zwingle. God abolished the slave-trade, but through William Wilberforce. God planted foreign missions, but through William Carey. God woke up England from its eighteenth century skepticism and spiritual lethargy, but through John Wesley and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. And when the Incarnation had taken place, and the Atone-

ment had been finished, and the Resurrection had set its seal of completion and victory on the work of Christ, God sent His Gospel ringing through the world, but through Paul the Apostle, and Philip the Evangelist, and the lay helpers Aquila and Priscilla, and such as these. A human agency is the channel along which the Divine purpose flows to its consummation. There is always, then, both room and necessity for human labor in God's cause. God expects it, waits on it, works through it. It was one of the noblest elements in Paul's great character that he gave himself to this needful and demanded labor with such enthusiastic zeal. It is one of the elements in the noble character of Epaphroditus that he became in labor Paul's companion. That is what all Christians ought to be—companions in labor. "Why stand ye all the day idle?" is God's question. "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard," is God's command. We pray, "Thy kingdom come," and that is right; but the answer to our prayer hastens or tarries as we labor or are laggard. Com-

panions in labor—that is what all Christians ought to be.

But there is a latent nobility in this companioning labor of Epaphroditus I should like to bring out before you if I can. It was a kind of labor which kept itself girded and set at duty notwithstanding changing and tempting circumstances. There is many a sturdy and stirring piety ruined by a simple change of residence. There is many a Christian much in labor in one place, who has only listless hands in another. The habit of Christian activity seems often to be sloughed off, simply because a man has moved from one town or city to another, as a snake sloughs off his skin, though this new skin of a Christian, rather an un-Christian laziness, is a very poor exchange for the old one. But the latent nobility of the laboring of Epaphroditus, I would have you notice, is that it was constant, that it could stand this ordeal of change of place. Coming as he did from the provincial Philippi to the metropolis Rome, he was not so occupied with its sights and shows and new experi-

ences that he could find no time to lend a hand to Paul. There in Rome, even, he became the Apostle's companion in labor. He found work to do and did it, and kept on doing it. I like this nobleness in duty which is grand enough to stand a change of place.

There is a pertinent vacation lesson for us here. The streaming out of the city congregations into the country in the summer has become a fact of our American life. Well, when the summer Sunday comes, even in the country be, like Epaphroditus, a companion in labor. Do not be on the look-out for nothing to do, but for something to do. If it only were more done in the spirit of Epaphroditus, this annual streaming out of the city congregations into the country would be of immense religious benefit. Though you reverse the process, it will work just as well the other way. He lived in Philippi, but, coming to Rome, was companion in labor there. You live in Rome, and in the summer go to Philippi, only go in the spirit of Epaphroditus, go to be com-

panion in labor there. Here is some humble pastor in some little town; attend his ministry, and so help him. Here is some struggling Sunday-school; take the class vacant of a teacher, and teach it. Here is the country prayer-meeting; go to it and pray in it and speak in it and sing in it. You will do no slight good thus. Help religiously wherever you may be. As Epaphroditus did not leave his religion in Philippi, refuse to leave yours when for a season you leave your home. Ply your ministry even in your most transient tarrying-place. Be with those with whom in God's providence you may sojourn, companions in labor. Be that always; be that everywhere. That is a noble character which is persistent in duty.

Fellow-soldier—still another constituent in this noble character of Epaphroditus. There is no denying it, Christianity is a warfare. It is a warfare inward. Paul felt it when he said, I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.*

* Romans vii. 23.

Paul felt it when he said, again, I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.* It is a warfare outward. Paul felt this when he said, If, after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus;† also when he was in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.‡ Now, Epaphroditus was one with Paul in this noble struggle; inwardly toward capturing the self for Christ; outwardly toward capturing the world for Christ. If Paul was true and steady in his higher rank, Epaphroditus was as true and steady in his lower. In George Ticknor Curtis' "Life of Daniel Webster," it is told of Captain Webster, the father of the great Senator, how, as a soldier in the Revolution, he stood guard at Washington's head-quarters, the night after Benedict Arnold's treason. When he was posted for

* 1 Corinthians ix. 26. † 1 Corinthians xv. 32.

‡ 2 Corinthians xi. 26.

the night as officer of the guard at headquarters, Washington, oppressed and anxious at the terrible defection, said to him "Captain Webster, I believe I can trust *you*." * Fellow-soldier with Washington was Captain Webster, and as true in his place as the Father of his Country was in his. So true fellow-soldier was Epaphroditus with Paul, loyal to the same cause and resolved in the same service. And fellow-soldiers still are all the Christian strugglers down the ages. And that man is no real member of the glorious company who is not conscious sharer in the battle inwardly, that he may master self for Christ; and in the battle outwardly, that he may do some part toward making Christ the master of the world.

But your messenger and he that ministered to my wants—thus again Paul speaks of Epaphroditus. By this he means, I think, that Epaphroditus was a man ready for any duty, whether as commissioned carrier of what the Philippians sent to Paul, or, being a

* Vol. I., p. 4 note.

Rome, as the glad and ready helper of the Apostle. That is to say, he was not a man who fastidiously picked and chose his duty, would do this thing, but would not do that was not a man who, doing what was for the time bidden, let other and unasked duties lie about unlifted. Epaphroditus was a man who, when he saw a duty, did it, was ready for this or that, now to be messenger, then to be minister to the Apostle's need. And here, in this *gracious ready-handedness* comes out another element in his noble character. When the late Archdeacon Hare was tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, and was one day giving a lecture, a cry of fire was raised. Away his pupils rushed, and, forming themselves into a line between the building, which was close at hand, and the river, passed buckets from one to another. The tutor, quickly following, found them thus engaged, and at the end of the line saw one youth, delicate, and apparently consumptive, standing up to his waist in the river. "What!" cried Mr. Hare, "you in the water, Sterling; you, so liable to take cold."

'Somebody must be in it," the youth answered; "why not I as well as another?' Such is the spirit of all great and generous doing. "Somebody else will do it, let him," the mean man says. "Somebody else will do it, let him," too many professing Christians say, lazy, inert, prayerless, having a name to live, yet dead. But such will do nothing. They are not good for doing; they are only good for looking on and criticising. But a real nobility of character, seeing what for Christ's cause must be done, cries out, with sturdy cheer, "Somebody must do it, why not I?" and Christ's cause goes on triumphantly. Such great and generous doer was Epaphroditus; messenger or helper he would be; it mattered little which; either or both, so that what needed to be done for the Master's cause were done well and quickly.

Surely a most noble character—this of Epaphroditus—held here in the amber of Paul's speech about him, for your inspiration and for mine. A Brother, a Companion

in labor, a Fellow-soldier, a man, the cheerful utterance of whose ready spirit was, "Somebody must do it, why not I?"

Surely that man of us is noblest who is most like Epaphroditus; surely that church is the most prosperous which numbers the most members like him.

Consider, second, that even to a man so noble and so true to duty as was Epaphroditus *trouble came.* There in Rome he was taken sick. "For indeed he was sick, nigh unto death," says Paul. And then he tells us the cause of such sad sickness—even too strenuous toil; because for the work of Christ, he was nigh unto death. We would say such a worker, and at such a time, ought surely to be kept at working. But how true is it, that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways ours. The place of duty *is* always the place of the shining of "the sun behind the sun." But it is still true that even the place of duty is not devoid of shadows. Abraham was in the place of duty when at God's call he entered

Canaan ; but even in Canaan Abraham met trouble. The disciples were in the way of duty when, at the command of Christ, they set out on that night voyage to Bethsaida ; but that did not prevent the beating against them of that fierce head wind, nor shield from the necessity of exhausting struggle at their oars. This is a notion which the experience of life and the whole tenor of the Scripture ought to make us readier at unlearning than we are—that the clouds of trouble do not often build their chill, grey dome over the place of duty and of service. They do. And as we look at Epaphroditus, so grand a Christian, and carrying himself in such noble Christian fashion, yet smitten to death's door by sickness—the lesson is, that we are not to be surprised if the feet we resolutely set in duty's track strike, now and then, rough places, nor are we to imagine that we are *not* where duty calls if trouble comes.

Consider, third, that over and in the shadowing trouble there *was a pitying and loving*

God. But God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow — writes the Apostle. There are several things worth careful noting concerning this deathly sickness of Epaphroditus, over which God yet held pitying and loving hand.

One is—that even for such men as were Paul and Epaphroditus God makes no difference in the execution of His laws. Because Epaphroditus had exhausted himself *even in the work of Christ*, it did not follow that sickness would not come. There is something awful in the steadiness of God to His own law. Certainly of many at that time is Matthew Arnold's poem true:

> "In his cool hall,
> With *haggard* eye,
> The Roman noble lay"—

And his eye was haggard, and his brow fevered, and his whole life joyless with the sickness which dissipation had brought upon him and awful license, to tell of which no words are fit. And here was Epaphroditus

near to death with sickness, too—but for how different a reason, even because of too exhausting work for Christ. Yet the sickness came. If I infringe God's physical law, though for the noblest purpose, still the penalty falls. Sometimes, and I doubt not it was the case with Epaphroditus, a higher law must take precedence of a lower. Sometimes, for the sake of some great end, just because the higher is nobler than the lower, it is right for a man deliberately to say, I will push this cause of God and man, even until I lay myself out a sacrifice upon its altar, in sickness or in death. He is a poor soldier who will not dare wounds and death for his cause. But let us be certain, God will not change His laws even for such reason. Do not look for a special dispensation of Providence in the case.

Another thing worth noting, just here, is —that though there was such a thing as the ministry of a sudden and miraculous healing in the early Church, that ministry was not at men's constant beck and call. It was something special and peculiar, and only

occasionally conferred. It is a fair question, if Paul could at any time miraculously heal a sick man, why, instead of bending in such sorrowful anxiety over Epaphroditus, did he not by a word heal him? The plain answer is, he could not. That ability was only given now and then, for some great special purpose. There has been much talk among religious circles lately about a miraculous healing of the sick by prayer only. I am not going to deny the possibility. I am only going to say that, even in the early Church, it was at best unusual, and, in the, at least, apparent cessation of miraculous power in the Church of to-day, it is likely to be still more unusual. I think Epaphroditus, lying here sick in Rome, and with Paul sorrowing over him and plainly unable to heal him, ought to be a rebuke to those presumptuous people who, if they do not discard the use of means, at least look down upon them in a kind of disdainful way. The truth is that your sickness is God's call to you for the best physician you know, and to the most sedulous use of means. Then

pray for God's blessing on the means and you are in God's order. To throw away means is to throw away one of the links in God's chain. When I sedulously use means and sedulously use prayer, then I may expect God's blessing, but not otherwise.

For another thing to be noted about this sickness of Epaphroditus is what I just said, that somehow God was in it and over it. But God had mercy upon him, says the Apostle. I am not by a presumptuous use of prayer to discard means, nor am I by a presumptuous use of means to discard God and the prayer which reaches Him. I may not be able to tell precisely how, but it is still true that God is in things and over things. The ultimate cause is God. It is in Him we live and move and have our being. It is His hand that brings back the traveller who has gone nigh to the gates of death, and it is His hand also that opens for him those gates of mystery and His voice that bids him enter them. So be sure of this; doubt it never; even though you be smitten down as was Epaphroditus, some-

how a pitying and loving God is over you, and with you, too.

Consider, fourth, *that we are joyfully to recognize God in the affairs of life.* Receive him, therefore, *in the Lord* with all gladness, writes the Apostle. Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil.* It was God who gave back Epaphroditus to these Philippians. They were to receive him in the Lord, as God's gift to them. It is God also who gives us all the blessings of our lives. In thankful speech and praise we are to recognize Him, the Giver, and find new brightness in the brightnesses He sends, since it is

* James iv. 13, 16, Revised Version.

He who sends them. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright."*

Consider, fifth, *the sure memory of worth.* Here was a true man coming to this prisoned Paul; and now, just because he was the noble, helpful man he was, he lives embalmed in the grateful mention of the Apostle. That is all we know about him—that he was, and was such a man—but what a happy memory to leave. O friends, such sort of noble fame is possible for all of us. Not on parchment may our names be written, but we can leave them written upon human hearts, even as the name of Epaphroditus was on Paul's. There is a sure memory of worth. Do you remember Wordsworth's poem of "The Solitary Reaper"? There she is, a peasant girl, at her duty, cutting down the grain waving on the Scottish highlands. And as she works, she sings glad notes out of a trustful heart. The poet is passing by. He does not speak to her. I do not think

* Psalm xxxiii 1.

she even sees the poet. But how much good she does him, and because of the good she does, how, henceforth, the poet treasures her in memory :

> " Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
> As if her song could have no ending ;
> I saw her singing at her work,
> And o'er her sickle bending ;—
> I listened, motionless and still ;
> And, as I mounted up the hill,
> The music *in my heart I bore*,
> Long after it was heard no more."

Heart-fame may be ours too. If we, as did Epaphroditus, keep sounding through our life true and noble music, some heart shall be helped by it and shall hallow it and our memory shall not die.

CHAPTER IX.

REJOICING IN THE LORD.

I THINK that a very noble romance by Mr. Georg Ebers, entitled "The Emperor." This German scholar is the present authority upon all matters relating to ancient Egypt. The scene of the story is laid in Egypt. The "Emperor" is the Roman Emperor Hadrian, who was proclaimed Master of the World in the year one hundred and seventeen after Christ, succeeding Trajan. The object of the story is twofold—to depict the character of one of the greatest men who ever wore the Roman purple; and also to show how, in those days, Christianity was steadily and silently winning its way.

The Emperor Hadrian had come to Alexandria, in Egypt. He was much given to visiting his various dominions. At Alexandria they were repairing for his occupancy an old palace. At this work multitudes of

slaves had been set. The Emperor was accompanied by a favorite slave, whose name was Mastor. This slave had a family, but, of course, was torn from it while he was away with the Emperor. The slave's family was his one joy, and the thought of it kept a happy peace singing in his heart. He had just heard news, however, that his home had been ruthlessly despoiled and broken up—his wife gone, one of his little children slain, the other in helpless woe and want. And he, nobody but a slave, with no one to appeal to, and with no power to do anything. He is utterly wretched; he spends the night in tears and sobs; he doesn't care what becomes of him; he longs to die.

He was obliged to go, in the early morning, down into the court of the palace to bring water for the Emperor's bath. Down there he comes upon a group of these working slaves who have been set at the repairing of the palace. They are just preparing their frugal breakfast; and one old man, dressed in a poor and scanty tunic, but with a wonderful quiet joy shining out of his

eyes, is talking to the group. As Mastor the Emperor's slave, approaches, this is what the aged man is saying: "Let us go back to our labors, my Brethren. In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, it is written. It is often hard to us old men to heave stones and bend our stiff backs for so long together; but we are nearer than you younger ones to the happy future. Life is not easy to all of us, but it is we who 'labor and are heavy-laden'—we, above all others, that the Lord has bidden to be His guests, and not last among us the slaves." "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you," interrupted one of the younger men, repeating the words of Christ.

"Yea, thus saith the Saviour," said the old man, approvingly; "and He surely then was thinking of us. I said just now our load is not light, but how much heavier was the burden He took upon Him of His own free will to release us from woe. Every one must work—nay, even Cæsar himself; but He, who could dwell in the glory of His

Father, let Himself be mocked and scorned and spit in the face, let the crown of thorns be pressed on His suffering head, bore His heavy cross, sinking under its weight, and endured a death of torment, and all for our sakes, without a murmur. But He suffered not in vain, for God accepted the sacrifice of His Son who did His will, and said, 'All that believe on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And though a new and weary day is now beginning, and though it should be followed by a thousand wearier still, though death is the end of life —still we believe in our Redeemer; we have God's Word bidding us out of sorrows and sufferings into His Heaven, promising us, for a brief time of misery in this world, endless ages of joy;—now go to work."

And then the old man went on to address himself to certain special members of the group. This white-haired Christian was the overseer of these slaves. "Our sturdy friend, Krates," he said, "will work for you, dear Knakias, until your finger is healed. When the bread is distributed, remember,

each one of you, the children of our poor deceased brother Philamon. You, poor Gibbus, will find your labors bitter to-day. This man's master, my dear Brethren, sold both his daughters yesterday to a dealer from Smyrna; but if you never see them again in Egypt, or in any other country, my friend, you will meet them in the Home of your Heavenly Father—of that you may rest assured. Our life on earth is but a pilgrimage, and Heaven is the goal, and the Guide who teaches us never to miss the way is our Saviour. Weariness and toil, sorrow and suffering, are easy to bear, to him who knows that when the solemn hour is near the King of Kings shall throw open His Dwelling-Place, and invite him to enter as a favored guest"—the old man went on to say.

"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you," answered, again, another from the group. And then they ate their frugal meal; and then, with strong hands, because there was in their hearts a strange, rich joy, they went at their hard duty.

And for this Emperor's slave, Mastor—standing here and listening to it all—to these great new words of a Divine sympathy and help and promise—there shone a gleam through the darkness of his trouble; and subsequently, as the story goes, he entered as another convert into the heart-help and heart-joy of Christianity.*

Now, I have no doubt at all, that this little sketch is a perfect picture from the life. It was in this way precisely that in those days Christianity won its way. It had something for men which nothing else had, which heathenism had not, nor any philosophy, Stoical or Epicurean. It could tell men of a suffering, helping, divinely powerful and crowned Brother-Christ. It could open for men—for the lowest, for the slave even—the certainty of the eternal shining to which not rank nor riches, but faith only, was the entrance, and where the lowliest should become the guests of God. And so, you see, even into such oppressed and driven

* "The Emperor," by Georg Ebers, English translation, vol. i., pp. 192, 196.

ones as were these slaves toiling at the stones of Hadrian's palace it could send an inner joy of heart which outward condition could not spoil, which could take the pang out of pain, and give to the weight of even such heavy toil as theirs a kind of wing and uplift.

The Apostle writes to these Philippian Christians:

> Finally, my Brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*

And now, do you not also see—and in order that you might see it I have told you this fragment of the story—how these slaves in the court of Hadrian's palace were doing precisely what Paul told these Philippians to do—they were rejoicing in the Lord. I did not know where to find, than in this snatch from this tale, a better illustration of the Apostle's meaning. Joyless enough outwardly their lives were—that is evident enough; but their hearts held something better than even the Emperor Hadrian knew

* Philippians iii. 1.

of, for they had found the rejoicing which is in the Lord.

Many of the members of this Philippian church were slaves, too, like these toilers at Hadrian's Alexandrian palace. The early Christians were mostly poor people, despised and oppressed. Just now also these Philippians were in much trouble. Their beloved Apostle was a prisoner at Rome—whether he would be slain or not neither they nor he could tell; Epaphroditus, of whom we were thinking in the last chapter, and who was perhaps their pastor, was away from them, and had been sick nigh unto death; they were only a little buffeted band of humble Christians — and to be Christian then meant worldly pain and loss and scorning and sacrifice. And yet there is joy for them, and they are to rejoice. Writes the Apostle:

Finally, my Brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

This, then, is our thought—*the Christian Duty of rejoicing in the Lord.*

Will you notice, in the first place, that it is a *command* which is here laid on Chris-

tians. This rejoicing is something in which Christians are expected to be found. Rejoice in the Lord. The verb is imperative. Nor is this Scripture the only one in which this duty is enjoined. Again in this Epistle, in the last chapter, Paul urges—Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice.* In the Epistle to the Thessalonians the same command sounds out—Rejoice evermore.† Christians are to be a rejoicing company. They are not to be of the blackness, they are to be of the brightness. Here is a command. We are not enough apt to think of rejoicing as a duty commanded. We are apt, rather, to think of it as a mood, to be now and then, by some good chance, attained; as a great boon which may occasionally drop down upon us, but not as a possible and enjoined habitude of heart within whose shining confines and amid whose jubilance it is our high obligation to remain.

Nay, we go further than this, and are even somewhat chary of a too much rejoicing

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* Philippians iv. 4 † 1 Thessalonians v. 16.

We think there is danger in it—presumption, I know not what of possible evil. The world is full of proverbs like this—"Do not laugh before breakfast or you will cry before night," and Christian people have not been the first in speech and conduct to declare the adage false. Simon Stylites thought himself a great saint, because, for forty years, he lived upon the top of a pillar and never once came down. And there are Christians still who seem to think that the best odor of sanctity hangs about an isolated, withdrawn, cheerless, glum, gloom-shrouded life. But there is no such Christianity to be found in the pages of the New Testament. Its notes are not a dirge, they are a pean. Even amid the gathering shadows of Gethsemane and the Crucifixion, the best prayer the Master could find to utter for His disciples was that they might have His *joy* fulfilled in themselves. Christian men and women—it is your duty to rejoice. It is the commanded Christian mood, therefore it is the normal Christian mood. Religion ought not to be a north-east wind,

but sunshine and sweet June weather. The wrong is, not in having too much rejoicing, but too little. Listen, again, to such "Orders for the day" as these for Christian soldiers. Finally, my Brethren, Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I will say, Rejoice. Rejoice evermore. Rejoicing is, then, a *command* for Christians.

Notice, in the second place, *some of the reasons why* a high rejoicing in the Lord is necessarily a Christian duty.

One reason is, because it is only out of a rejoicing heart that the best Christian work can come. A dull heart makes heavy hands. Once, in the East, an artisan in the service of a rich master got into hopeless debt. His creditor was merciless, and told the man that unless he paid his debts within the year both himself and family should be sold as slaves. For the man to pay the debt was as impossible as it would have been for him to pile up the great pyramid in a night. His heart was chill and dull under this shadow.

His master noticed that every week his work was falling off. One day he spoke about it to the steward. "Why, sir," the steward answered, "that poor fellow can not possibly make good work. He can not manage his tools, for his hands tremble; nor can he see what he is doing, for his eyes are often filled with tears. He often sits down as in despair and sighs heavily. A heavy debt is pressing upon him, sir; and until it is paid, he will not be able to make one good piece of work." "Tell him, then, that I have paid his debt," said the master. And when the steward told the poor fellow, as you may suppose, joy unsealed its fountains in his heart. And now the hands, which had been moving as though there were great drags on them, became like wings. The master noticed no more falling off in work. The man's work was done swiftly, easily, vanquishingly, because it was done out of a joyful heart. Those returned exiles at Jerusalem were in sufficient trouble. They had had a terrible time building their walls and fighting enemies at the same time. To re-

organize and recompact their shattered nationality was a task of no small difficulty. And when standing within the protection of their rebuilt walls, and listening to the law, as from the pulpit in the street Ezra read it to them, it was no wonder that they should mourn and weep as they contrasted the glories of their fathers with their own weakness and sad ruin. But Nehemiah was a wise man. He well knew that mourning and weeping hearts make nerveless hands. There was a great work before the people. They are joyful hearts which make strong hands. And so he said to them—This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not, nor weep. Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

Says Mr. Emerson, "The joy of the spirit indicates its strength." If one be in cheerful temper, the faculties work well and

* Nehemiah viii. 9, 10.

easily; the imagination is clear, the judgment undisturbed; the whole soul is brave and powerful and master of itself. And thus the soul can nerve the hand for strong and conquering work.

> "We in ourselves rejoice,
> And *thence* flows all that charms or ear or sight,
> All melodies the echoes of that voice,
> All colors a suffusion from that light." *

It is truth that Coleridge sings. What we are within makes the most of that which is without. We need to obey this command of rejoicing in the Lord that out of glad hearts we may do victorious deeds for Jesus. I am sure we can not do them out of gloomy, moping, complaining, dejected hearts.

Then, another reason why a high rejoicing in the Lord is necessarily a Christian duty is, that it is only such rejoicing which rightly illustrates Christianity and so wins toward it. Do I not remember him? Shall I ever forget him?—that shrewd, kindly, heart-shining and so face-shining old Scotch

* "Ode to Dejection."

deacon, who was to my boyhood as a day in June. Can I ever cease to remember that lesson he taught me once of the duty and ability of looking at the brighter side of things; because even in what looks dark there *is* yet, though just now it may seem hidden, the gleam of the tender love of the Heavenly Father? He a withered, bent, rheumatic, asthmatic old man, winning a little living by raising and selling flowers; and I a boy sitting with him one cold November day in the pleasant warmth of his small green-house, and he cutting away at the roots of some plant or other, and I beginning to commiserate him—and he, with such sunshine in his face and such a cheery tone in his quavering voice, breaking in on me, and answering, "Why, my mon, don't you see the Lord is verra gude to me; don't you see what a pleasant place I've got to work in?—Why, mon, the climate of my green-house here is as pleasant as the climate of Italy; the Lord *is good*."—Dear, genial, brave, grand Christian; so brave and grand and genial because the *joy of the*

Lord was his strength. When I have thought things hard, and have fallen into dull and sullen discontent, how many times has that lesson of rejoicing come to me, and set me to counting up my mercies, and set again the birds a-singing that I had foolishly thought were flown and even dead. And do I not remember how that shining face of his, which was but the adumbration of a shining heart, drew me on toward Jesus, back there in my boyhood, and how scarce an uplifting influence in my early days was more powerful than that rejoicing heart.

Why, men and women, one such Christian as that Scotch deacon was worth a regiment of your doubters and your drivelers and your complainers and your Christians chronically out of sorts. I said—and I was not the only one—the whole city said it, when he died they almost shut the stores and hung the flags at half-mast to honor him—"Why," men said, "he *is* a Christian, he illustrates the sort of Christianity worth having, he shows forth the kind of Christianity *I* want." The strongest pulpit in

Cleveland was Deacon Sked's green-house: —nay, rather, was the old saint's Christian heart which kept on rejoicing in the Lord.

Besides, another reason why a high rejoicing in the Lord is necessarily a Christian duty is because there is so much in Christianity which is occasion for rejoicing.

There is in Christianity the revelation of a guarding, helping Heavenly Father. How joyful those ought to be who believe a truth like this, may perhaps be best seen in contrast with the smitten slavish life of a man who willfully rejects it. Lord Macaulay tells of D'Argens, one of the infidelistic crew whom Frederick the Great of Prussia gathered round himself. This man hated Christianity with the utmost rancor, and would not believe in God. And then, of necessity, since a man must have something to believe in, fell into the most pitiable faith in the silliest of superstitions. He would not sit down at table with thirteen in the company; he turned pale if the salt fell toward him, he begged his guests not to cross their knives and forks on their plates; he would

not for the world begin a journey on Friday; if his head ached or his pulse beat quick, so frightened was he that his dastardly fears and effeminate precautions were the jest of all Berlin.* Small rejoicing in such a life. How full of rejoicing ought to be the life settled in the faith that *all* things work together for good to them that love God.

There is in Christianity the revelation of a forgiving Christ. What a great, true hymn that is by Count Zinzendorf, and how abounding in rejoicing should those be who have a right to sing it.

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress,
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which, at the mercy-seat of God,
Forever doth for sinners plead,
For me, e'en for my soul, was shed.

"Lord, I believe were sinners more
Than sand upon the ocean shore,

* Macaulay's "Essays," vol. v., p. 190.

Thou hast for all a ransom paid,
For all a full atonement made." *

There is in Christianity a revelation of a future Heaven.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and shewed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: having a wall great and high: having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels: and the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb.†

Surely full of rejoicing should those be who front so glorious a Home and Destiny.

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* From the hymn by Count Zinzendorf, 1739; translated by John Wesley, 1740.

† Revelation, chap. xxi., Revised Version.

With such truths, and a whole realm of others like them, on which to stay their hearts, and with such resplendent issue toward which their faces turn, where can the Children of the King find right or reason to go mourning all their days?

Notice, in the third place, some of the ways in which we may obey this command of Rejoicing in the Lord.

By keeping before ourselves the *true end* of the True Life. In one of the noblest sermons in any language—that on happiness and joy, by Dr. Horace Bushnell—a distinction is most sharply made, our usual blurring of which much hinders our rejoicing in the Lord. It is just this distinction between happiness and joy. Dr. Bushnell says: "Thus happiness, according to the original use of the term, is that which *happens*, or comes to one by *hap*, that is, by an outward befalling or favorable condition. Some good is conceived, out of the soul, which comes to it as a happy visitation, stirring in the receiver a present excitement. It is what

money yields or will buy ; dress, equipage, fashion, luxuries of the table ; or its settlement in life, independence, love, applause, admiration, honor, glory, or the more conventional and public benefits of rank, political standing, victory, power. All these stir a delight in the soul, which is not of the soul, or its quality, but from without. Hence they are looked upon as happening to the soul, and, in that sense, create happiness. But joy differs from this, as being of the soul itself, originating in its quality. And this appears in the original form of the word ; which, instead of suggesting a *hap*, literally denotes a *leap* or *spring*. The radical idea, then, of joy is this : that the soul is in such order and beautiful harmony, has such springs of life opened in its own blessed virtues, that it pours forth a sovereign joy from within. It is not the bliss of condition, but of character. The soul has a light in its own luminous center, where God is." *

Now, it is not the business of Christianity

* "Sermons for the New Life," pp. 226–7.

to confer happiness; but it is the business of Christianity to implant joy. What Christians are to look for and expect out of their religion is not happiness so much; it is joy. The soul is to front, not outward things—money, equipage, fashion, luxury, honor, applause; but *inward* things—the still rest and quiet peace and shining joy which come from the Divine Indwelling. If you are bound to get your chief good out of condition instead of out of character, you will not have much rejoicing in the Lord. But if you will put the true end of the True Life before yourself, if you will determine to make your chief good *character*, if you will value likeness to the Lord more than the external trappings and gewgaws of a merely outward happiness, you shall find that the Lord shall so come to you and dwell in you and speak to you and honor you and satisfy you that your heart shall be an unending song and your days perpetual praise. But you can not rejoice in the Lord if all the time you are determined to rejoice in *things*—nor out of them can you get much

lasting rejoicing any way. Keep before yourself the true end of a True Life—the Lord, His conscious presence, His benediction audible enough to your inward ear; put sternly out of your life what will hinder that, and you shall enter the Divine Summer, and, like the birds thronging the summer, your heart shall not be able to help singing because of its rejoicing in the Lord.

Still another way of obeying this command of rejoicing in the Lord is by looking away unto Jesus.* How long shall I take counsel *in my soul* having sorrow in my heart daily? wails David in the thirteenth Psalm. The answer is easy: David shall have sorrow in his heart just as long as he takes counsel in his soul. Looking inward and downward David shall not find occasion for much else than sorrow, nor shall any man. But when David begins to look upward and outward and Godward, lo! the Psalm which begins as a plaint ends as a praise—I will sing unto the Lord because He hath dealt bountifully with me.† From my sin and weakness

* Hebrews xii. 2. † Psalm xiii. 6

which indeed is sorrowful enough, let me look away to Jesus, who for my sin is forgiveness, and for my weakness a present help, and I shall find inexhaustible reason for rejoicing.

And another way in which we may obey this command of rejoicing in the Lord is by a humble, reverent, and yet real *claiming* of our privileges in the Lord. Passing out of a religious service one saw an old man with a deep gloom upon his face. "You are not happy, friend," he said. "No, I am not," the old man answered; "I have been praying for salvation for twenty years." "Praying for salvation for twenty years," the other exclaimed; and then, by a most pertinent illustration, he showed him how needless such unanswered praying was. "The other day," said he, "I saw a gentleman who was paralyzed on one side, and was wheeled about in a Bath chair. As he was out one day he saw a poor man sitting by the roadside smitten in the same manner, and calling out, 'O, for God's sake, give me a ha'pney.' The rich man told his servant to wheel him

over to the poor man. He did so, and the gentleman held out a half-a-crown to the beggar. But the man still kept crying, 'O, for God's sake, give me a ha'pney!' He was blind. The gentleman said, 'Here, my good fellow, is a half-a-crown for you.' But the man was deaf, and he still kept calling out for a half-penny. The servant wheeled the gentleman nearer, and at last he made the poor man hear, and then he thankfully took the half-crown. Now, my friend," this man went on to say, "that is just what you are about. God is offering you salvation as a free gift, through the blood of Jesus Christ; but instead of taking it, and thanking Him for it, and rejoicing in it, you keep on asking for it. The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And the thing to do with a gift is to take it, not to be constantly praying that you may have it. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.'" Yes, the thing to do with a gift *is* to take it. And what is true of God's great gift of salvation is true of all His other great gifts in Christ, which gifts are yielded

for the nurture of the life which has been saved. But we too much pray only, and do not dare to take, and so imagine our prayers unanswered. Let us dare to take, reverently but really. And we shall find ourselves so rich in surprising spiritual treasure that it shall be a thing spontaneous to Rejoice in the Lord.

Our faithless, meagre lives are the winters which kill our joys.

CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT EXCHANGE.

AS I have read descriptions of it, I have come to understand that there has been never fashioned in material form a representation so perfect—at once so sweet and grand, so august and at the same time so welcoming—of Him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows and hung upon the cross for our redemption, as is that marble statue of the Christ by Thorwaldsen, standing there in the metropolitan church of Copenhagen, the capital of the artist's native land. Men say, who have seen it, that it is as though from the still marble there streamed down upon them, in concentrated ray, the whole of the gracious light of the Gospel story. No other hands touched that statue save the artist's own. The preliminary sketches for it filled a long time with the most consuming toil, and so many were

destroyed as utterly unworthy, that the artist often quite despaired of in the least actualizing his ideal. But when at last the exquisite and eluding conception was caught and imprisoned in the marble, we are told that deepest melancholy like the midnight settled down on Thorwaldsen. Being asked the reason, he touchingly replied, "My genius is decaying." "What do you mean?" said the visitor. "Why," the great sculptor replied, "here is my statue of Christ; it is the first of my works I have ever felt satisfied with. Till now, my idea has always been far beyond what I could execute. But it is no longer so. I shall never have a great idea again."

The incident is most suggestive and significant of the relation in which Christ must stand to every man who gains Him. Christ must stand to the man in such relation and will in no other. Here was this great artist, who had given, that he might gain and body forth a measurably true conception of the Christ, all his time and genius and painfully-acquired skill—everything it was possible

for even so great a man as he to give. In return he had achieved, at least in some degree, his mighty purpose. But in that achievement he had exhausted himself. In that vast accomplishing his powers had pushed to their utmost bloom. Now there was the blight of decay upon them. Toward any other purpose, for any other work, he had not now to give what he had given that. In the realm of art he had done what Paul says he had done in the realm of the spirit —he had counted all things but refuse that he might gain Christ.* And neither in the realm of art, nor in any realm other, can any man gain Christ in any different way. Christ must stand to men in this relation of paying everything for the sake of Him or He will stand in none. Christ must be the most worthy, the most precious, the most overmastering person and possession for any man or that man can not gain Christ.

You remember how Jesus spoke once a parable. He said—Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking

* Philippians iii. 9.

goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.* For the one pearl, large, rare, round, lustrous, the paragon of pearls, everything else was bartered. For one thing multitudes of things were yielded. And the man was rich in the possession of the one thing, though, to gain it, he had to yield the many. And for that merchantman there was no other way of gaining the supreme thing than to yield the many lower things.

What is parable at the forty-fifth and forty-sixth verses of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, is veritable and personal transaction from the second to the ninth verses of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians. We reach here in these verses a most precious autobiographical passage. The great Apostle here discloses to us his own personal experience. He tells us here how *he* is the merchantman selling all that he had, and buying the one pearl of great price. He tells us here how he is a man com-

* Matthew xiii. 45, 46.

ing into the only possible real relation with Christ. That I may gain Christ, he says, I yield such things. The New Version brings out more clearly than the Old the idea of exchange of other things for Christ, of a supreme and solemn barter of other things for Him—which is the vertebral thought of the entire passage. Let us read according to the New Version :

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision : for we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh : though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh : if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more : circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews ; as touching the law, a Pharisee ; as touching zeal, persecuting the church ; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ.*

* Philippians iii. 2, 8.

This, then, is our question. In the light of this Scripture, *What things must a man yield in order that he may gain Christ?*

In order that he may gain Christ one must yield the *companionship of evil men.*

Beware of the dogs, says the Apostle to these Philippians in the second verse of this third chapter. In the religious use of that day the epithet meant profane, impure, shameless people. There were enough of such around this struggling infant church. I am sure I am not straining Scripture when I say that one meaning of the Apostle here —and a meaning very practical to us—is that if we would gain Christ we must beware of companionship with the evil. And this bewaring is to be very stringent; we are to beware in the sense of absolutely withdrawing our own companionship. You remember how the first Psalm sings of the safe life. Blessed is the man—who is a pleasant fellow, who is hail fellow well met with everybody, who is so open to the breezes of companionship blowing from

every quarter, that he is, in the language of the street, a jolly soul? Does the first Psalm sing its benediction over such? Not so. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly; nor standeth in the way of sinners; nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Blessed is the man who does not allow himself even on the fringe of a bad companionship. He does not even take a walk with such—for he knows the truth which the Psalm suggests, that walking with such is the door into standing with such, into the loitering, tarrying in the way of such; and that companionship is not apt to be a thing of the hall-way of a house; rather door opens on into door; and the next apartment to standing in the way of sinners, is sitting in the seat of the scornful. He who will not, in the first place, walk with such, will not be very apt at last to find himself sitting on confidential seats with such. You may call that man puritanic and strait-laced and bigoted, you may fling at him what hard names you choose. But the first Psalm calls him

Blessed. The truth is—and here is a truth vital for younger people as well as older—that there is no force more magnetic and interpenetrating and assimilating than that of companionship. There are companionships the breath of whose atmosphere is a moral tonic and inspiration. There are other companionships which are like the fire-damp in wells and mines. There is nothing in them for the lungs of a pure and righteous living to breathe. The better purposes, the old hearthstone truths of God and duty, the celestial suggestions of a mother's prayers, the steady principles of a father's counsels, the plans of noble action which a man forms in his holier hours, are at their last gasp in this carbonic acid of a bad companionship. Hungry is the heart of the stranger, I know, for some companionship in the great city; desolate is the little hall bedroom, and dim its lights and chill its air; plentiful, I know, too, are the dogs of evil luring at every street corner, and flaunting their glare and welcome in the lecherous play-house. But, young man, the

bitterest solitude is richer than companionships with these.

Here is a young man or woman drifting toward the mystery and the might of love. Well, that is right, if they are drifting toward truth and nobleness and purity. But if, as in some quiet hour the one or the other thinks over the effect of that companionship, feels conscious that because of it the moral tone is lowered—that his gay, careless, sensual, scoffing words are disintegrating to her moral sense; or her pretty but frothy frivolities are honeycombing his best and manly purposes—then, even though you may think it severe, let me utter the Apostle's warning, *Beware of the dogs.* Bad companionships must be yielded—if you would gain Christ. You can not find Him, the pure, the sweet, the gracious, the divinely true, there. If you would gain Him, you may not be in these.

Also, in order that one may gain Christ, one must yield the *listening to evil teachers.*

Beware of the evil workers, says the Apos-

tle again to these Philippians in this second verse. The word refers primarily to those who seek to propagate their evil, and so means those who have set themselves to teaching it. And there were many such among and around this infant and struggling church. As bloodhounds track their prey, so were the feet of the Apostle tracked by evil teachers; who, following after him, sought to subvert the tender converts he had made from the broad, grand, simple Gospel he had preached. Not still as a lake in summer when the winds are whist, was that first and early and Apostolic era. Not so warm and genial with the gracious airs of brotherhood as we are apt to think it—touched and fascinated as we are by the blue haze of distance which wraps it round. Not the best age of the Church was that first age. The golden age of Christianity is ahead. It is not behind. But stormy and bitter with a great controversy was that early time. Paul said, Christ—He is the chief thing and the one thing, and faith in Him alone is the saving thing. His opponents said, Christ—

and Moses and the ceremonial law and circumcision and various ritual; Christ some, and these a good deal too—Christ some, and these more.

Beware of such, cries Paul—these evil workers, these evil teachers. Christ stands in Divine and royal supremacy. Christ is the only Saviour. He is the Sun; think not to light yourselves through the glooms of life and death and judgment by the flickering human torches which these badly-working teachers would put into your hands. Beware of them.

And, while the method of the controversy has somewhat changed, the principle of the controversy remains.

There are Romanists who tell us a little of Christ—but more of membership in the one only Church, and an authoritative priesthood, and saving sacraments, and innumerable mummeries.

There are High-Church Ritualists who tell us possibly a little more of Christ—but more than of Him, of baptismal regenerations and the real presence of the altar and the necessity of ritualistic forms.

And then, on the other hand, there are Liberals, as they call themselves—who tell us nothing of Christ as a Divine Saviour—but speak of Him only as the ideal man, and bid us by our own endeavors work out our own atonement.

And then, in addition, there are still others, Rationalists and Scoffers, who tell us that possibly Christ may stand on a level with Plato or with Socrates, but by no means higher; that nature is God, that sin is only ignorance, and that how we may be saved is the foolishest of questions.

And, concerning all of them, the Apostle thunders out—Beware of the evil workers. Such teachers are neither to be followed nor trusted in. They can not lead you into gaining Christ. However splendid may be their pomp of ritual, however fascinating or learned or, as men call it, original they may be—they obscure Christ; and He is the only Hope and Saviour. To gain Christ one must yield these.

Also, that one may gain Christ, he must

yield *bad doctrine.* Beware of the concision, says Paul again to these Philippians in this second verse. This concision was the symbol and expression of the bad doctrine which these evil teachers preached. They were great sticklers for circumcision — a merely external rite. They said, Christ's power to save is limited by the want of that. They valued more their submission to such outward observance than spiritual and vital faith in Christ. And Paul speaks of this merely outward ceremony with a noble and satirizing scorn. He will not dignify it by its true name. He calls it derisively the concision—the cutting, the mutilation. And he says, in effect, beware of the bad doctrine underlying it.

There are some who say it makes no difference what you believe, provided only you are earnest in it. There are others who say a man is not responsible for his beliefs. Paul never said—the entire Bible never says —a thing so supremely foolish. The truth is doctrine—belief is the seed out of which life blooms. And you can not get lives of

roses out of seeds of nightshade. Error is not the seed of truth, and can not be. And a bad doctrine about Christ can not bring you into gaining Christ. And your earnestness in a bad doctrine will not, because you are earnest in it, any the quicker bring you to the truth. And what doctrine soever obscures Christ, lowers Him, uncrowns Him, puts Him out of position as the sole and sufficient Saviour, marries works to Him or rites to Him, as possessing with Him saving efficacy—as this doctrine of the concision did—is bad doctrine, though it be enshrined in the most venerable of creeds and professed by the most ancient of churches. And of that — responsible for your beliefs, and sure that your earnestness in a lie can not make of it a truth—you are to beware. If one would gain Christ, he must yield bad doctrine.

Also, if one would gain Christ, he must yield *all things whatsoever as grounds of salvation;* he must be the merchantman *selling all* for the sake of the one most precious and

most costly pearl. Notice, in the eighth verse of this section—Yea verily, and I count *all things* to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may gain Christ.

But wait a moment, Paul—that is a most extraordinary and sweeping statement. Are you not very rash and very sweeping too? You have been talking about bad companionships and bad teachers and bad doctrine, and I grant you that these, and things like these, must be yielded in order that one may gain the sweet, pure Christ; but you have said that you count *all things* as refuse for the sake of Him. And do you not know that you possess a great many right and morally valuable things? You can not mean that, in order to gain Christ, one must yield as grounds of saving hope such things as these.—Let me particularize a little.

You were circumcised the eighth day—you were circumcised in the right way and at the right time; you possess the true and

proper ceremonial qualification ; if you were living in my day, I should say, as you doubtless would were you living now—that you had been baptized in the right fashion and were a professing Christian and a member of the church. Do you mean to say that as a ground of salvation that amounts to nothing, and that if a man do not gain Christ he will miss everything though he have these things? And Paul answers — Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

But, see here, Paul—you have something more. They make a great deal of the law of heredity now — the culture of it, and the impulse of the pure, grand generations back of him, giving noble stuff and stamina to a man ; and you are a magnificent specimen of the value and validity of the law of heredity. You are of the stock of Israel, you are of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the best tribes in the whole company of them—who belonged to the true Israel and did not go into rebellion against the

son of Solomon under the banners of Jeroboam; and besides, your blood is perfectly pure, you are a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Do you mean to say that that as a ground of salvation is to be accounted nothing in comparison with Christ, and that a man who trusts in heredity and not in Christ trusts in vacancy? And I am sure Paul would answer—for the Bible so declares—that this law of heredity is a most great and precious thing, and that a high, pure ancestry is one of the best gifts with which God can bless a man—it means better health and better moral forces, and ten thousand subtle and valuable endowments. But as a ground of salvation as compared with personal and vital knowledge of Christ, Paul still replies—Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

But, then, O Paul, see here again—you possess something else most valuable. You were not sacrilegious, like King Saul, when he offered the sacrifices he had no right to; you were not idolatrous, like the Israelites,

when they danced around the golden calf in the wilderness; you were not murderous and timid and sensual, like Ahab. As touching the law you were a Pharisee, as touching the righteousness which is in the law you were found blameless; you were a white and moral and decent and punctilious man. —Now, do you mean to say that all this sweet morality of yours, as a ground of salvation, goes for nothing in comparison with Christ? do you mean to say that you can trust that not at all, but that, notwithstanding that, and giving up trust in that, you must trust Christ altogether if you would gain Him? And Paul, in answer, will by no means avow the monstrous maxim that the greater the sinner, the greater the saint, but he will say, I had not known sin but by the law—he will say that when he began to see how searching, how thought-judging, how motive-touching that law was, how like a two-edged sword it cut between the joints and the marrow, laying bare the thoughts and intents of the heart—that then he discovered, to his surprise and horror and

despair, how little in the eye of God of a real dense righteousness—as to thought, as to imagination, as to motive, as to pure volition, that external blamelessness possessed;—and so he will answer again—Yea verily, and I count *all things* to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

But, see here, just once more, O Apostle—there is one other moral possession of yours I have not spoken of. You were a most conscientious man. You obeyed your conscience. You thought verily that those of that sort should be given over to prison and to death—Concerning zeal, you persecuted the church. Now, granting that your conscience was mistaken, you yet were conscientiously mistaken—you did the very best you knew. Now, can you not trust to that pure conscientiousness of yours as a ground of salvation? Surely you need not yield that, that you may gain Christ. And Paul answers—It is impossible for me to find hope and healing there; that is to me the worst sin on me. For, while I did not know

and so went on in the way of a mistaken conscience—I *ought to have known*, I *had light enough*—the whole old Scripture was full of Christ had I but seen it; but I would not see it. Talk not to me of trust in conscience as compared with trust in Christ; I never knew right conscience till I saw the light of Christ. And so, once again the same old answer comes from this merchantman selling all, that he may purchase the one pearl of great price—Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that *I may gain Christ.*

And so, the plain teaching of this whole great section is, that we must turn from everything bad, and—as a ground and reason for salvation — yield everything, how good soever in our eyes it may seem as well, that we may gain Christ. Christ is all to us, or He is nothing to us. His must be an absolutely unshared throne. As the hymn has it—

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
. . . . . .
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."*

Such things must one yield if he would gain Christ—even everything. Such is the price of the Great Pearl.

Said one of the purest of men, most shining of scholars, and widest of thinkers, and who had devoted a long life to the best good of his fellow-men—said he—lying there amid the death shadows and waiting for the end, and confronted by eternity, and counting up the grounds of confidence on which he might rest his soul and risk his immortal destiny—said he—everything else failing him, everything else, under the pressure of that time to which you and I must come at last, breaking beneath him, as a straw would snap under the weight of a

* Edward Mote, 825.

leviathan—said he, "We have the BLOOD OF CHRIST."* That held. No fear, no sin could break that down. Only that can sustain an immortal soul.

Have you been, like Paul, the merchantman selling all, that you might possess the Pearl of Great Price? O, in all your merchandizing, neglect not to merchandize toward Him.

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* *Death of Schleiermacher*, "Discourses and Essays,' Dr. Shedd, p. 313.

CHAPTER XI.

GIFTS IN CHRIST.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY carried the manuscript of his "Vanity Fair"—which the world has come to recognize as a marvellous literary treasure—to nearly twenty different publishers, before it was at last and gingerly accepted. Charlotte Brontë, working her life into that great story of "Jane Eyre," and producing a masterpiece, had a similar experience of difficulty and denial. That, among the grandest histories of these later times—that magnificent narrative of as brave a struggle as the sun ever shone on—between William the Silent and his Protestant Dutchmen, crowded into the sea-drenched corner of Holland, and the Romanist and malignant Philip the Second of Spain, master of half Europe, and of half America as well—that

wonderful recital of this struggle and triumph, Mr. Motley's "History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic," when it was first seeking publication, was declined. That song of oppressed labor, which has been in itself a moral reform, and whose wailing notes we, even in these days of sewing-machines, would do well to heed—

> "With fingers weary and worn,
> With eyelids heavy and red,
> A woman sits, in unwomanly rags,
> Plying her needle and thread;
> Stitch, stitch, stitch,
> In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
> And still, with a voice of dolorous pitch,
> She sings the Song of the Shirt,"—

Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt," was thrown, when it was first presented for publication, as good for nothing, into the waste-basket. Milton's mighty epic was sold in the first place, and with difficulty, for a poor and pitable five pounds. Often the best gifts to the world have been by the world the gifts most unappreciated.

Most emphatically has this been true of

God's utmost Gift to the world, His Divine Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To how many has He seemed but as a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness, and with no beauty that we should desire Him!

The question for this chapter is—*Is He really thus?*

In the preceding chapter we were thinking of the cost of the Pearl of Great Price; of the merchantman in the person of the Apostle selling all that he might gain possession of it. We heard him exclaiming over ond over again—Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

The question now is, *What did the Apostle gain in Christ?* Getting the Pearl, did the Pearl mean much to him? was it worth the price he paid?

Look into this Scripture, and behold Paul's answer:

And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness

which is from God by faith: that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.*

In this Scripture Paul goes on to tell what, in gaining Christ, he gained in Him. He enumerates six things. Giving all that he might gain Christ, he tells us that in Christ he received these most precious treasures:—1st, Security—and be found in Him. 2d, Righteousness—not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith. 3d, Intimacy—that I may know Him. 4th, Power—and the power of His resurrection. 5th, Inward Purity—and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death. 6th, Victory—if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

They are such treasures, which from the

* Philippians iii. 9, 11, Revised Version.

Pearl of Great Price gleam out. In selling all that he might gain Christ, Paul received such Gifts in Christ. Let us study their value one by one.

First. In gaining Christ Paul received *Security*—And be found in Him.

Let me tell you an Old Testament story, that I may bring out the significance of this great Gift in Christ as shiningly as I can. You will remember that after that disastrous conflict in the plain of Esdraelon with the Philistines, Saul, the king, was slain upon the heights of Gilboa. You will remember that David was afterward crowned king at Hebron. You will remember that Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, refusing to submit to David, set up a rival kingdom, the official city of which was Mahanaim. You will remember that then, as was natural, and for a good while, there was clash and contest between the rival kingdoms. But David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. At length Ishbosheth, the rival king, was slain, the

sceptre of his house was broken, and David became unchallenged master. You will remember also the tender love which, in the vanished years, had bound together the souls of David and of Jonathan, the son of Saul. Jonathan had met his death, but David's love for him was immortal. So, when the crash of war had ceased, and David was settled on the throne the Lord had promised him, and as consecration for which, way back in the years of his boyhood, the prophet Samuel had poured the sacred oil upon his head, David, with the love for Jonathan still burning in his heart—looking anxiously around, inquires, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for *Jonathan's sake?** And then at last it is found out that there is a man living who is a son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth by name.

But Mephibosheth is by no means a perfect person. He is a halting cripple. Long ago, when he was but five years old, and the news came of the tragic overthrow and

* 2 Samuel ix. 1.

death of Jonathan and Saul in Jezreel, in her fright his nurse had caught him up and sped away. In her fright, too, she had dropped him, and thenceforth he had been maimed and lame.* But he was Jonathan's son still, and, as though *found in* Jonathan, David looked upon him. His relationship to Jonathan, poor, lame creature though he were, made him in David's sight worthy of love and confidence and protection. In himself he possessed no special claim on David. But, looked at as the son of his best friend, and so found in Jonathan, he was armed with the most grasping claims on David's heart. So, found in Jonathan, no harm should come to him if the might of David's kingly hand could hinder it. The confiscated personal patrimony of his father's house was at once restored to him; and thenceforth, as one of the king's most favored and cherished and protected sons, he was to eat at the royal table. And not because of anything in himself, you see, but simply because in David's sight he was

* 2 Samuel iv. 4.

found in Jonathan did all this security and welcome and blessing fall round Mephibosheth like the curtains of a guarding tent.

Which things are a parable. So Paul, giving all for Christ, *is found in Christ.* Coming by faith into such intimate relation with Him, henceforth by the eye of God he is seen to be in Christ. Maimed he may be and a cripple morally through many a fall and wreck of sin, but he is in Christ as Mephibosheth was in Jonathan, and all the might of Jehovah's infinite hand is pledged to his defence. Even as Paul, wrapped round by this Divine security, flings out his challenge—Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able

to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Second. In gaining Christ, Paul received in Christ *Righteousness*—not having a righteousness of mine own, even that of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

Mark two things concerning the old righteousness which Paul discards :

1st. *It is his own*—not having a righteousness of mine own ; one's own is the only poor apology for righteousness which any morally maimed and crippled man can of himself win.

2d. *It came of the law*—not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law. But before the awful severity of the law it could not be esteemed as any righteousness at all ; for the only answer which can satisfy the law is that of an exact obedience, both external as to deed and in-

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* Romans viii. 35, 37, 39.

ternal as to motive; and that Paul neither had rendered nor, indeed, could he.

Mark three things concerning the new righteousness which Paul receives in Christ:

1st. *It is through faith*, not through works of merit — that righteousness which is through faith; it is not won by doing, it is received through believing.

2d. It is through believing *in Christ*—that righteousness which is through faith in Christ; one has not to win it; to receive it one has but to believe in Christ with an all-consecrating faith.

3d. It is from God—the righteousness which is *from God* by faith; it is a righteousness originating from God and therefore sufficient—indorsed and approved by Him.*

There, on the Palatine Hill at Rome, I have waited amid what remains of the ancient Basilica or Hall of Justice of the Emperors. There, on the raised and rounded apse, is standing still a portion of the marble chair

* Cowles' "Shorter Ep'stles," *in loco.*

in which the Emperor sat, when from his lips there fell the final sentence of his court of last appeal. Here, set amid the marble floor of that great court of last appeal, is a round and purple stone, on which the accused stood to listen to that culminating sentence of weal or woe. It is not at all unlikely that that very purple stone was pressed by the feet of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. For doubtless here, within this most ancient and most awful Hall of Justice, in which were sounded forth the sentences of last appeal, Paul heard, not many years after the writing of this Epistle to the Philippians, the closing adjudication of his case uttered from that marble chair—*condemno*, I condemn thee—and was led forth to martyrdom. But at that very moment when that final *condemno* struck upon his ear, Paul, lifting his thought to another tribunal infinitely more awful, and before which he was so soon to stand, might be sure of the going forth of another and reversing sentence—for often the decisions of the courts of earth are set aside by the

decision of the court of Heaven—Paul might be sure that at that moment there went forth from that Supreme Judgment Seat another sentence altogether — namely, NON CONDEMNO, I condemn thee not. For he had gained Christ, and in gaining Christ had received in Him this righteousness which is from God by faith—this perfect righteousness outwrought by Christ in our human nature for all believers. And, a condemned criminal here, he was a triumphantly vindicated and saved soul there. For not even that all-searching and all-holy and all-dominating tribunal can discover fault or flaw in the righteousness of Christ.

Third. In gaining Christ, Paul had received in Christ *Intimacy*—that I may know Him.

In one of the most marvellous and precious books in any literature—Hawthorne's "Marble Faun"—there is a touch of nature at once most closely true and at the same time most sadly false. The scene of the story, you know, is laid in Rome ; and Hilda, the hero-

ine, is a soul as white as any lily. There has been a most foul and awful deed committed, such as were not uncommon there under Papal rule, and the knowledge of it has come to her. She can not, for various reasons, divulge it; but the knowledge of the hideous thing presses down upon her white and tender soul like a horrid and soiling incubus. She is in agony. Where can she turn for help? Her soul faints. The awful thing will kill her. At last, one day, she is waiting beneath the springing dome of the great church of St. Peter. She sees yonder a confessional for English-speaking people. She is no Romanist, but, pressed by her distress, she will fly with her awful secret there, and, amid the sanctity and secrecy of the confessional, will divulge it all. True the touch of nature is, and at the same time false. True in this respect, that the heart of man is cavernous with hunger for some strong, true, tender person into whose ear, and into whose sacred confidence as well, it may tell forth its wants and woes, its struggles, its burdens its distresses.

False is the painting of the artist's pencil in this respect—that he makes the food and satisfaction of that hunger a poor, fallible, sinning, helpless man, though he sit dressed in the tinsel and unmeaning authority of a Roman confessional. No, the real food and satisfaction of such hunger is the *Person Christ*, His Divine-human Heart is the true confessional. He is sympathetic with a veritable human experience, and at the same time powerful with Divinity. And the treasure of His Intimacy He opens for those who trust Him. Not afar is He, but near: and their whispered confidences He keeps, and to bruised and burdened hearts He dispenses triumphant help and healing.

Fourth. In gaining Christ, Paul received in Christ *Power*—and the power of His resurrection.

Not enough, I am sure, do we think of and prize that whole side and style of Divine blessing which comes to men from the tremendous fact that our Christ did not remain dead, but in the Resurrection rose

victor over death. For the great need of all men, weakened and emasculated as they are by sin, is not simply precept, but is also power—is not only that they be told what to do, but that they be given strength to do.

Hartley Coleridge—the son of the great Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and inheriting from his great father the moral blight of a weakened and vicious will, and giving himself over into the grip of the destroying appetite for drink—Hartley Coleridge wrote in his later years these sad and pathetic lines on the fly-leaf of his Bible:

"When I received this volume small,
My years were barely seventeen,
When it was hoped I should be all
Which once, alas! I might have been.

"And now my years are thirty-five;
And every mother hopes her lamb,
And every happy child alive,
May *never* be what now I am."

Hartley Coleridge knew well enough what he ought — even amid the fearful

wreck of his last years he knew it. What Hartley Coleridge needed was *strength*—a girded will, that he might *do* what he knew he ought.

Consider that this is the immense distinction between the religion of Christ and every other religion which has ever asked for the suffrages of human souls.

The religion of Confucius is a religion of precept. It teaches some very beautiful and righteous things. But Confucius was dead long ago. And there is no vital and conquering and interpenetrating *power* in Confucius to enable men to do that which his precepts teach.

The religion of the wonderful East Indian Sakya-Muni is a religion of precept. It teaches some very beautiful and righteous things. But Sakya-Muni was dead long ago, and there is no vital and conquering and interpenetrating *power* in Sakya-Muni to enable men to do that which his precepts teach.

The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion of precept. It teaches the right and the

beautiful things. It is the truth. But our Lord Christ is not dead long ago. He died, but He rose again. He is to-day the living Christ. And as by His atoning death He opened a way for sinful men into the Divine forgiveness, so by His glorious Resurrection and Ascension He dispenses *power* to forgiven men, enabling them veritably to do that which forgiven men ought in their new and forgiven life to do.

Here is an immense difference—this whole difference of a real and imparted power. Paul not only knew that he *ought* to be greater than the changing vicissitudes of outward circumstances, but from this risen and living Christ he received *power* to be greater. And so he says—I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

* Philippians iv. 12, 13.

Paul not only knew that he *ought not* to be vanquished from his loyalty to truth by menacing danger, but from this risen and living Christ he received *power* triumphing. And so he says—At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Paul not only knew that he needed and must suffer discipline, but from this risen and living Christ he received *power* to suffer it in a grand, soul-helping way. And so he says about that thorn in the flesh—Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then am I strong.†

* 2 Timothy iv. 16, 18.

† 2 Corinthians xii. 9, 10.

This, I am sure, is one of the things Paul meant when he talks about having gained Christ, and of getting in Christ the *power of His resurrection*—namely, this power to be and to do which falls and flows from the victorious hand of a living because risen Christ.

And this power is for us too, and very really do we all need it.

A great many years ago, a young man in an Eastern town, in one of the rooms of the old homestead, was packing his trunk, preparatory to starting on the morrow to begin life in what was then the distant West. While he was getting ready thus, his mother came into the room, and said to him, "My son, you are going away from the home-shadow to begin life for yourself in a new and distant place. You will meet difficulties, you will be surrounded by temptations. There is one thing your mother wants to say to you as you go. Will you listen to it?" "Certainly, mother," the young man answered; "I will gladly listen." "Well, then, my son," the mother said, "re-

member this, as *the* thing your mother told you—character is the best capital—*character is the best capital.*" And that young man went forth from the home-shelter determining to build his life upon that principle. And he did it. And again and again, as the years have sped away, he has seen the precise truth of his mother's words. But should you ask him how he has been enabled, against difficulty and amid temptation, to keep on building his life on that great principle his mother taught him, he would tell you, as he has in effect told me—for I know him well—that the only way in which he was enabled to turn that precept for life into a fact of life, was as he prayed for and received from the living because risen Christ the *power* to do it. O, this that Paul got in gaining Christ—how sadly do all men need it—the power of His resurrection.

Fifth. In gaining Christ, Paul also received in Christ *Purity*—and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death. Among many other meanings

which, doubtless, this Scripture carries, I think it holds this meaning—namely, that in gaining Christ Paul had received such pure and true hatred of sin, that, rather than sin, he would gladly have fellowship with Christ's sufferings, and even die as He had died. Christ's sufferings and death were because of and in contest with sin. It was that He might put away sin that He drank the cup of Gethsemane and hung upon the cross. And now, believing in Christ, there had been implanted in Paul by the Holy Spirit the principle of the new pure life, the innermost meaning of which was hatred of and conflict with sin, though his own sufferings and death even should in the contest mount into some poor likeness with his Lord's. He would suffer what pain he might or what death he might rather than himself do that which slew his Lord. And thus, if need were, he would enter into very fellowship with his Lord's sufferings, and become conformed even to such a death as His.

The true Christian has received from

Christ the new life of Purity, and that can not and will not allow sinning. As Christ hated sin, so the true Christian hates it, even to the extent of suffering and death in awful duel with it. And the possession of this Purity is the real test of our possession of the other Gifts in Christ. For Christ came, not simply to save men from the punishment of sin, but from sin. And if we have not within ourselves this sin-hating Purity which feels toward sin even as Christ did, suffering and dying to smite it down, then, however we may flatter ourselves, none of the other Gifts in Christ are really ours. Alliance with the pure Christ means alliance with Him *against* that which He hates.

Sixth. In gaining Christ, Paul also received in Christ *Victory*—if by any means I may attain unto the Resurrection from the dead.

I stood, not a great while since, by the coffin of an aged and triumphant saint. After a shining life, she had passed through a shining and peaceful death into the better

brightness. And I knew, as I stood beside her coffin, and read the words of the Immortal Hope, I was reading what in her case were most true words, for she was certainly with her Lord in Paradise. And yet, vast and wonderful as is the triumph she had already through Christ achieved, I knew that for her there was to be even a grander victory. As to her body she was still the thrall of death; over that death held his fixed and ghastly sceptre, even though her released spirit was in Paradise. But for her there is to be loftier triumph. That sceptre which death sways now over her body is to be altogether broken. I can not tell you how. I do not altogether understand what the glorious Resurrection from the dead can mean. I am sure it can not mean merely the re-emergence of this old, imprisoning, earthly body. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a *spiritual body.** But I do know that the glorious Resurrection from the dead—the first Resurrection

* 1 Corinthians xv. 44.

—that of which the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus is the type, must mean some surprising, sublime, inconceivably magnificent shattering of death's sceptre, so that the redeemed shall shout, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* And the intermediate state of Paradise shall pass on and bloom into the consummated ineffable Heaven. It is such Victory of the first and glorious Resurrection from the dead which Paul is to receive in gaining Christ. And we ourselves also, if we gain Christ.

Security, Righteousness, Intimacy, Power, Purity, Victory—is not the Pearl of Great Price worth having?

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* 1 Corinthians xv. 55.

CHAPTER XII.

NOT HAVING ATTAINED.

LET us recall the line of thought on which the two previous chapters have been threaded.

In the tenth chapter we saw Paul, like the merchantman in the parable, parting with everything as a ground of salvation—ritual qualification, ancestral advantage, a white morality, a strenuous conscientiousness—that he might gain Christ.

In the eleventh chapter we saw the Apostle, yielding thus everything *for* Christ, getting inestimable treasure *in* Christ—security, righteousness, intimacy, power, inward purity, victory. Such values from the Pearl of Great Price gleam out.

But now this thought may come—a man so spiritually endowed and furnished, guarded in security, shining with righteousness,

lifted into intimacy, girded with power, vigorous with purity, radiant with the hope of victory, is he not a morally *finished and perfect* man? He must have overpassed the need of contest with sinfulness and sinning. He must have lain aside the weapons of his moral warfare and taken up the trophies of a moral triumph—the branch of palm, the crown of gold, the robe of whiteness. Yielding all for Christ and gaining so much in Christ, he must have a personal and complete perfectness.

And lest any one should have such a false thought, Paul at once goes on to give correction to it.

There are two ways in which you may be presented with a harvest—the one way in the fruit-form, the filled and golden grain gathered into the garner; the other way in the *seed-form*. And of course the harvest given you in the seed-form necessitates the *doing* on your part of a great many necessary things—the sowing and the cultivating and the nurturing and the constant caretaking and the reaping and the threshing

and the gathering, in order that thus you may get the harvest, which, notwithstanding, was really given you though in seed-form.

This, it seems to me, is precisely the meaning of what Paul hastens on to say—these Gifts in Christ are not given in their fruit-form, but are always given in their seed-form, and I myself have multitudes of strenuous things to do concerning leading them up into their grand fruitage. Thus the Apostle speaks :

> Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect : but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended : but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Three points spring at once into our vision :

First, *the true feeling for the Christian.*

* Philippians iii. 12, 14, Revised Version.

Second, *the true action for the Christian.*

Third, *an immense encouragement for the Christian.*

First, then, consider *the true feeling for the Christian.*

The true feeling for the Christian is *not* any supposition or assumption of moral perfectness. No Christian has any right to imagine that he has reached a sinless perfection. *Not* that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect.

I am sure, however, the Apostle does not mean we should not affirm that it is both possible and right and reasonable for the Christian to attain a very sweet and satisfying and restful and joyful feeling of closeness with God and wonderful victory in Him. O, how much there is *now* for us in God, of power and unruffled rest amid the strain and stress and fret of our daily lives, we too sadly little know and too sadly little care to know. I remember a passage in the life of Dr. Doddridge. He is writing to his wife, whom he loves tenderly—indeed, his

marriage was one of the ideal sort—who is sick and away from him. He says:

"It may seem strange to say it, but really so it is, I hardly feel that I want anything. I often think of you and pray for you, and bless God on your account, and please myself with the hope of many comfortable days with you; yet I am not at all anxious about your return, nor, indeed, about anything else. And the reason, the great and sufficient reason is, that I have more of the presence of God with me than I remember ever to have enjoyed in any one month of my life. He enables me to live for Him, and to live with Him. When I awake in the morning, which is always before it is light, I address myself to Him, and converse with Him; speak to Him when I am lighting my candle and putting on my clothes; and I have often more delight in coming out of my chamber, though it be hardly a quarter of an hour after my awakening, than I have enjoyed for whole days, or perhaps weeks, of my life. He meets me in my study, in secret, in family devotions. It is pleasant to read, pleasant to compose, pleasant to converse with my friends at home, pleasant to visit those abroad—the poor, the sick; pleasant to write letters of necessary business, by which any good can be done; pleasant to go out and preach the Gospel to poor souls who are thirsting for it, and others dying without it; pleasant in the week-day to think how near Sabbath is;—but oh!

much, much more pleasant to think how near eternity is, and how short the journey through the wilderness, and that it is but a step from earth to heaven."*

Such staying of the soul on God and such quiet peace in God it is possible for us to know immensely more of than we do. When Polycarp was martyred, he said that the flames which thronged him round seemed even as a sweet, cool wind, so wrapt and restful was his soul in God. And there is a transfiguring quality in God's conscious presence with us which can and ought to take the blistering heat and hurt out of the so vastly lesser and weaker flame of the daily disciplines of life. There is for Christian experience here and now—not yonder in Heaven, but here and now—not only the gift of a south land—but also the springs of water.†

But to reach there and to dwell there is one thing. And to imagine that you have

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* "Heroes of Christian History," *Philip Doddridge* by Charles Stanford, D.D.

† Joshua xv. 19.

attained a sinless perfection is quite another. The one is reasonable and right and to be done. The other is wrong and unscriptural and not to be thought of.

This imagination of perfection in which some people allow themselves is not the true Christian feeling, because it is *plainly unscriptural.* Paul distinctly says, not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect.

This imagination of perfection is not the true Christian feeling, because, searching through the Scriptures from back to back, you can not find *a single instance of it*—save only Him, the lonely perfect One, who had a right to challenge, Which of you convinceth me of sin?* Noah was not perfect, nor was Job, nor was Moses, nor was David, nor was John, nor was Peter, nor was Paul. Noah was not always the master of his vineyard, and Job was not always faithful and submissive, and Moses was petulant, and David

* John viii. 46.

wallowed in an awful slough, and John wanted to burn people whom he did not think exactly right, and Peter denied Christ and then in a cowardly way afterwards withdrew himself from his Christian brethren at Antioch, and Paul says, Not as though I had attained, either were already perfect.

This imagination of perfection is not the true Christian feeling, because it is always trying itself by the *wrong standard.* It makes all the difference in the world by what you test things. Iron pyrites looks sometimes very much like gold, and, indeed, has often been mistaken for it. Many foolish people, seeing a little shining gleam scattered through the rocks, have gathered all the money they could themselves, and then impoverished their friends, to purchase large masses and areas of them, thinking that the gleam they saw was gold ; and then have found themselves with nothing but the barren rocks on hand. Iron pyrites will stand a great many tests as long as you do not try it with aqua regia But aqua regia

is the test for gold. Try it with that and you will soon discover its worthlessness So this fancied perfection always fails when you bring it to the genuine and appointed standard. And that is—*not* one's internal feeling about himself; it is quite possible for a man to feel very comfortably for many reasons, and yet at the same time be all wrong. The genuine and appointed standard is not one's feeling about himself, his rapture, even his conscious victory—but is the external and stern and unchanging standard of the Divine Law.

The other summer, during the vacation, I heard a Methodist minister preaching. It was a right noble, stimulating, nurturing sermon which he preached, in many respects; I was very much obliged to him for it; I was a better Christian for it. But in the respect of this notion of perfection I am sure it was both hurtful and false. Said he, putting the matter as it is so often put, "I said to Brother A."—who was a little doubtful about this doctrine—"I said to Brother A., one Sunday morning about nine o'clock,

Brother A., you have been up about three hours; now, do you really think that you have sinned during these three hours?' 'Well,' answered Brother A., 'I can hardly say that I remember now to have distinctly sinned during that time.' 'So Christ has kept you during those three hours, has He not?' asked the minister. 'Yes, I suppose He has,' Brother A. replied. 'Well, now, if Christ has kept you during those three hours, do you not suppose He can for another hour?' 'Why, certainly,' said Brother A. 'And for another?' 'Why, certainly!' 'And for another?' 'Why, certainly.' 'And then can't He go on keeping you?' 'Why, certainly.' 'Well, that is the doctrine of perfection—Christ keeping you hour by hour and moment by moment," explained the minister.

Well, I wanted to answer the minister very much—but, of course, I could not while he was preaching—"My dear sir, your questioning of Brother A. is well enough—provided you set him to trying himself by the right standard; but that is precisely what

you are not doing. You are telling him to try himself by what *he thinks* about himself. Whereas the right standard is not what he thinks about himself, as to whether now and then he has consciously sinned or not, but is always what *God thinks* about him as He has expressed that thought in His external and unchangeable and holy law. Do you remember"—I wanted to say—"that passage in Corinthians where Paul tells us, 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment: yea I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself'—that is to say, of course, I have no consciousness of special and distinct and actual sinning. I try my utmost to do the right—*yet am I not hereby justified.* I have no right to say, because just now I know of no special sin upon my conscience, I am therefore sinlessly perfect—but *He that judgeth me is the Lord.*" * Therefore, because this imagination of perfection is always trying itself by the wrong standard, by what it thinks about itself in-

* 1 Corinthians iv. 3, 4.

ternally, rather than by the Divine Law externally, is it impossible that it be the true Christian feeling.

This imagination of perfection can not be the true Christian feeling, because the prayer our Lord taught us distinctly denies it. Forgive us our debts, is one petition of that pattern prayer. For a man to imagine that he has gotten beyond the need of praying this, is to affirm that, in this world, he has reached a stage and sort of life which in this world Jesus never contemplated: is to deny concerning himself the thought of Christ about him.

Not that I am already made perfect, says the Apostle. No; the true Christian feeling is not one of perfection, but is one of imperfection, of a conscious and humble missing the mark and lowness, of the daily recognition of and sorrowing for sin, of the truth that while we do have great gifts in Christ, we do not have them in their fruit-form, but in their seed-form; that not yet

have we reached the goal of the completed triumph, that Christ's dear grace has mightily much to do with the best of us before we can take the full and sounding song upon our lips—Satisfied, because we have awakened in His likeness.

The true Christian feeling being, then, no futile, swollen, self-sufficing, supercilious dream of a sinless perfection—but rather, like Paul's, a humble consciousness of non-attainment and of imperfection, being a recognition of the fact that *not yet by any means* have we reached Christ-likeness—pass on, in the second place, to consider what, amid this true Christian feeling, *is the true Christian action.*

There are several particulars in this action.

The first is—the *resolute seizure of the highest possible ideal.* Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Nothing less than this was the ideal and unrelaxing aim of the Apostle—to get

actually stereotyped in himself the very loftiest point and pitch of moral attainment which even the Lord Jesus Himself had intended for him. No aim lower than this—even the shining heights of Christ's celestial thought for him. And it was because his ideal was so lofty that the Apostle's action was so noble. Forevermore it is the highest thought of things which turns the thought into the highest fact of things. Even though the fact fall constantly short of the thought, it is evermore the high thought which is the inspiration and energy of the high deed. Over every picture that Raphael ever painted, above every statue that Michael Angelo ever sculptured, beyond every song that Milton or Dante or Wordsworth ever sung, there hovered an ideal, seen by the spirit's eye, heard by the spirit's ear, which yet the canvas could not catch or the marble imprison or the song enshrine. But the reason of the Madonna of Raphael, and of the Moses of Michael Angelo, and of the "Paradise Lost" of Milton or the "Inferno" of Dante or the "Ode to Duty" of

Wordsworth, was just this *ideal* of picture or statue or song struggled toward but not altogether captured. Why they wrought so well was because they thought so high. And so it is the Christian who, like the Apostle, thinks high, who determines to apprehend that for which he was apprehended—it is he who, struggling toward the high ideal, will approximate it the quickest and the surest. And while the ideal of picture or statue or song or speech has never yet been reached by the true artist or the genuine poet or the real orator, the ideal of the Christian *shall at last* be reached. They wear white robes in Heaven because they are white-souled. At last they *have* apprehended.

"Far out of sight, while yet the flesh infolds us,
Lies the fair country where our hearts abide;
And of its bliss is naught more wondrous told us,
Than these few words—'I shall be satisfied.'

"Thither my weak and weary steps are tending,
Saviour and Lord, with Thy frail child abide,
Guide me toward Home, where, all my wanderings ending,
I shall see—Thee, and shall be satisfied."

But the pledge of the high and final victory is the seizure of the high ideal for it. And so the first particular in a true Christian action is—the resolute seizure of the utmost Christian ideal, the determining to apprehend that for which Christ apprehends.

Just to miss perdition, just to squeeze into Heaven, just to be saved so as by fire! No, Heaven merely—that is not the Christian ideal. *Heavenliness*—that it is. Saved by Christ, *to become like Christ*—that it is. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of His Son*—that is God's thought for you; not that your selfish soul just manage to slip inside the Gates of Pearl. And imperfect as you are consciously, and with no right whatever to imagine yourself any other than halting and staggering and slipping and failing and imperfect, the true action for you is, that, as the marksman seizes the target with his eye and means to hit it, so you shall seize even such transcendent ideal as the complete conformity of even your poor self to the image of His Son.

The second particular in a true Christian action is—*the immediate turning of the high ideal into the highest possible practice and actuality.* Says the Apostle—But *One* thing I *do.* Now, this One thing—this high ideal is not one thing in the sense of being a narrow thing, but rather in the sense of being a topmost and including and transfusing thing. That is a mistake which we are constantly making, that the doing the One thing is the attempt to become Christlike in one thing. Nay; to do the One thing is to attempt toward Christlikeness in all things.

Not long since, I was detailing to a very dear and cherished friend of mine a very noble action of another. He listened intently while the recital was going on, and at its end broke out—"That's it, that's it—that is ever so much better than feeling good in prayer-meeting." What he meant was that that manly deed was better than a merely sentimental enjoyment of religious worship. So it was. But it did not follow, as we are so often apt to allow ourselves to

think, that that man, Christlike in his manly deed, ought not also to be Christlike in a real and deep enjoyment of religious worship. Sometimes men say, to be religious is to pay one hundred cents on the dollar. That is true. He is a poor Christian who does not purpose and struggle to pay one hundred cents on the dollar, and who salves his conscience about his undischarged debts by the raptures he gets into in the prayer-meeting. But while a man ought to be Christlike in the fullest meeting of his obligations, he ought also to be Christlike too in a rejoicing worship. The One thing is not simply to do Christlikely in one thing; it is to accomplish Christlikeness *in all things*. Just as there is no tiniest flower in summer that is not flushed and painted by the one sunshine, so there ought not to be any part or power or faculty or opportunity or distress or sorrow of the Christian life that is not filled with the radiance of the one ideal—Christlikeness.

And now, the second particular in true Christian action is really and actually to set

about getting heart and home and business and church and pleasures and companionships—the whole nature and the whole relations of the nature—filled with Christlikeness. Not to dream about it or intend about doing it—but to set about doing it. But One thing I *do*, says the Apostle.

Do you remember Wordsworth's poem of "Laodmia"? The oracle had said that the Greeks could not conquer the Trojans except some ship of Greece pushing itself boldly up upon the Trojan shore, the chief should be the first to suffer death. The husband of Laodmia determined to be the chief who, grounding his vessel's keel the first upon the Trojan strand, should meet death first, and so open the gates for the Grecian victory. After his death, the husband of Laodmia, by the permission of the gods, revisits his wife to tell her the story of his death. And the poem is the recital to her of how he purposed to do the noble deed; but for love of life and for love of her was full of hesitation, and on the edge of it and yet not doing it. And in two lines

the poet tells the necessary story of every noble life :

> " Old frailties then recurred ; *but lofty thought*
> *In act embodied* my deliverance wrought."

Ah, that was the secret of it—that must be the secret for every noble life and deed ; notwithstanding frailties, getting lofty thought in act embodied. So the second necessary particular in true Christian action is, the *high ideal in act embodied*—the *doing* the One thing with the Apostle.

A third particular in true Christian action is—*Such a noble discontent with all past attainment* as shall urge one into the utmost endeavor toward loftier spiritual achievement in the future. Says the Apostle, Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Did you ever think that the trouble with too many Christians is that they are quite measurably satisfied simply because they

believe they have been converted, simply because they think they have right to cherish what they call a "good hope" in Christ? That is a too frequent trouble, preventing a noble discontent and so hindering a high advance. Just as though the whole of being Christian was in the beginning of it. But look upon that racer in the arena. He has gone through a long course of most laborious training. All the superfluous flesh upon him has been trained away. Every muscle has been developed into strength and toughness. He has practiced, for weeks and months beforehand, the safest and least exhausting way of running. Now the time for trial has arrived. See him there. The word has been given, the race has begun. Watch how all his energies are tasked. See how all his strength is skilfully expended, how the muscular feet grasp the ground, how the body gathers itself for each forward spring, how the perspiration beads the brow, how the breast heaves, how the face is livid with exertion. Is the racer content? Does he stop now to felicitate himself upon

his fine muscular development? No; that laurel wreath in the judge's hand is the prize before him. He is straining every nerve to win it. Through all these weeks and months he has known only discontent, nor shall he find content till the judge's hand has placed that wreath upon his brow. This is the image under which the Apostle presents himself to us here. "O friend," he says, "I have not attained, I follow after. I am grandly discontented with myself. I am not altogether Christlike yet; I would be Christlike. I am determined to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Till that be done I am restless with endeavor."

Such, then, is the true action for the Christian. Conscious of imperfection most sad and real, by the seizure of the highest ideal, by actual practice toward the highest ideal, by such stirrings of noble discontent toward all past attainment as shall force him into straining struggle toward higher summits, he is to seek to make actual in

himself the majestic thought of the Lord Jesus for him.

I know how it is with you because I know how it is with myself. What Melancthon said I must often say, and I think you must: "I have found out that young Melancthon is no match for the old Adam." Strong still is the old Adam in every one of us, and therefore difficult is this high and holy struggle to which, by the very terms of our Christianity, we are each summoned. Let me, then, bring you, involved in this struggle as you ought to be, *the immense encouragement for the Christian* which our Scripture suggests. This is the encouragement, that for the victory which shall be the issue of this struggle we have been *laid hold of by Christ.* Says the Apostle, that I may apprehend *that for whéch also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus.* For this very apprehension the Christian has been apprehended. For this very thing the great hand of Christ has seized him. He shall not be defeated Christ will not let him go, Christ will carry him through.

I remember when I was a timid, shrinking boy, a thousand miles from home, in a strange college. Through an inaptness of mind in that direction, and because of slightness of preparation, I was in terror in the presence of my mathematics. They were a tangle to me and a darkness. I must struggle through them or fail in my college course. It seemed to me I could not. Shall I ever forget how one of the noblest teachers I have ever known, and, I think, one of the noblest who has ever lived,* "apprehended" me for mathematics? He laid hold of me for them, and said—You shall struggle through them and unravel them. He gave me extra tuition. He was tender and patient and clear in his explanations. He went over the ground with me again and yet again. And I am sure I never can forget how I began to apprehend that for which he had apprehended me. The light began to come. The tangle began to straighten. I began to understand and see. I do not think I could have done it of my-

* The late Prof. Greene, of Brown University.

self. But when he laid hold of me toward that thing, through him I began to lay hold of that for which he had laid hold of me.

For even the celestial purity Christ Jesus has laid hold of us. Therefore, we, too, shall lay hold. Surely here is immense encouragement while we struggle. We shall not fail. We are struggling on toward the sure shining of the Victory.

Think of this question. If to be Christian is to struggle thus, if only thus can the Heavenly radiance welcome at the last, what must be for that man who never struggles, who carelessly and self-pleasingly and somnolently floats with the current and does no more? Startling question that of the Apostle Peter—And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

* 1 Peter iv. 18.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN STRUGGLER.

NOW they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible, writes the apostle to the Corinthians.* That is to say—the lowest sort of a laurel wreath possible, that which is symbolical of a strength and agility simply physical, that which means only bulging muscles, and long wind, and plunging blow, or iron grip, or deer-like swiftness, is never won but through long endeavor, steady self-denial, girded energy of training. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate—self-controlled, and straining onward—in all things.† But that which is the goal and glory of such strenuous struggle is a crown

* 1 Corinthians ix. 25.

† 1 Corinthians ix. 25.

corruptible — a fading wreath of laurel leaves. We are seeking a mastery incorruptible. They strive for that and we for this. But both they and we must *struggle*, though our aims be so diverse.

Or look into a realm immensely higher. I was reading not long since of Demosthenes. Listen to the story of his struggle for the crown of oratory as another has detailed it: He built a subterranean study, to which he daily repaired to exercise his voice. He secluded himself from the public for months together, devoting himself to physical discipline and study; and lest he should be tempted during these seasons to abandon his purpose, he shaved the hair off one-half his head, and thus prevented the possibility of relinquishing it; he increased the capacity of his lungs by speaking while rapidly climbing steep hills. He increased the penetrating power of his voice by declaiming on the shores of the Ægean Sea when lashed into fury by a storm, so that he could cope with the tumult of an Athenian audience. He corrected his imperfect

enunciation by the painful expedient of placing in his mouth, while speaking for practice, a handful of pebbles. He improved his awkward bearing and gesticulation by speaking before critical masters, and also before a mirror in his own house. He acquired the power of giving ready expression to his thoughts by continually talking. When persons who had suffered some wrong came to him, he would listen to their complaints, and reply that they had not been much wronged, and then when they were repelling this charge he would study their action and words as an artist studies the form he is to transfer to canvas. Nor did he spare labor or expense in the study of the elocutionary part of oratory under the best masters. To his style of thought and of expression he was equally alert. He copied and then recopied the entire writings of Thucydides, that his own style might catch the glow and beauty of that. General bearing, gesture, vocal expression, the rhetorical framing and delicate balancing of sentences and even parts of sentences,

the nice choice of words—there was no element which goes to make up oratory which missed his intent attention.* And so at last he was enabled, as the wind moves all the summer leaves at its own will, to become the perfect master of the crowding multitude of the Agora. And though, as far as this world goes and history, the laurel leaves of that high excellence are unfaded still, they too were only won through struggle.

Now the underlying teaching of this third chapter of the Philippians, of the various parts of which we have been thinking in the few preceding chapters, is that the Christian life in what it purposes and aims at, is not without, but is entirely within the dominion of this great law of personal and tasking struggle. A slippered, dreamy, sentimental drifting—there are no sounds of such Lotus-land as that, in the strong energy of that *initial volition* of the soul for Christ, when, with the apostle, it exclaims:

* Condensed from Townsend's "Art of Speech," pp. 21, 25.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may gain Christ. Nor is there the droning of an after-dinner easy-chair, or the complacent quiescence of the perfectionist in this swift and awfully earnest self-disclosure of the apostle concerning the *practice* of the Christian life,—not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Everywhere in Scripture these double sides of the Christian life come out. The Christian life is of God, and yet it is of man too. It is of predestination, and yet it is of free will. It is of faith, and yet it is of

works. It is of believing, and yet it is of doing. It is of receiving, and yet it is of acting. It is of the Divine help, and yet it is of the human endeavor. It is of the blessed and down-falling Grace of God, and yet it is of the choosing and grasping and contending purpose of man. We may not be able to discover just where and how the two sides meet in harmonious marriage. But though our thinkings and theologies are too low and weak to be invited to their nuptials, it is still true that both sides are, and that they are both in harmony. They both are. And you must recognize them both. Think of the Divine side only and you are a fatalist. Think of the human side only and you are a poor, pitiable, unhelped waif. Recognize them both and equally—that is the true theology which does it, though you may find in it chasms which it is impossible for a human thought to bridge. It is true that all whom the Father hath given Christ shall come to Him; and it is also true that *you* must come that you be not at last cast out. It is true

that it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure; and it is also true that *you* must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. It is true that in Christ you have Security, since you are found in Him; and Righteousness, since you are clothed by Him; and Intimacy, since you know Him; and Power, since having risen from the dead it is His office to dispense it through the Holy Spirit; and Purity, since at your regeneration the new life was implanted and begun in you; and the Hope of Victory, since through Christ you may attain the glorious Resurrection from the dead; and it is also true that to dream of yourself as perfect is to indulge the wildest of nightmares; it is also true that you must follow after, that you may yourself get hold of that for which Christ took hold of you.

The fruitful earth, and the brooding sky, and the chemical energy of the sunbeam, and the outpoured bosom of the summer cloud, and the freshening touch of the cooling dew, and the processes through which a

seed can seize the inorganic soil and change it into organic sustenance for man and beast, are of God; and yet if a man would be a harvester in the crowning and gathering days of Autumn, in the ploughing and the sowing and the harrowing and the hoeing days of Spring, he must be a *struggler*. Every harvest is of God, and yet every harvest is of man, and it is of man through *manly struggle* up to it. And every palm-branch waved yonder in the Blessed Country, and every white and gleaming garment for the saved, and every jewelled crown flashing on brows redeemed, are of God; and yet they are of man also, as, by God's good Grace, through manly and Christian struggle they have been reached and gained. If you are a Christian you are a struggler. If you are not a struggler you are not a Christian. The Christian life on its human side is within and not without the sovereignty of struggle. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible; but if you will not "do it," there can be for you only the missing of the crown.

Attend to these words of the Apostle:

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you; only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk. Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them which walk even as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*

Recognizing, then, the underlying fact that it is to Christian strugglers this third chapter of the Philippians mainly speaks, I do not know how I can better display the practical meaning of these verses than to say that they seem to me to contain Apostolic suggestions for Christian strugglers. This, then, must be the purpose of this chapter, to discover, as they are disclosed to us in these verses, *the Apostolic suggestions for Christian strugglers.*

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* Philippians iii. 15, 19, Revised Version.

This is the first suggestion: *Get the highest and truest thought about the Christian Life*—Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.

This epithet "perfect" does not mean the sinlessly complete. There are no such people in this shadowed world. It means those who are thorough in their intent of struggle, who are not, like children, imagining that life is but a longer summer afternoon. The word is quite a favorite one with the Apostle. As, for example, where he tells the Corinthians—Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect* — plainly among them that are *mature*, developed as to mind and character, and so able to receive the weighty wisdom he would disclose to them. Said Jesus once to the disciples—I have many things to say unto you, *but ye can not bear them now*:† so He would not say these things now, but would wait for the quickening culture of the Spirit in them. By these perfect ones to whom wisdom can

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* 1 Corinthians ii. 6. † John xvi. 12.

be told the Apostle means, not babes in Christ, but the maturer and more developed men and women who have grown further on into Christ, and who therefore can apprehend and appreciate the weightier wisdom. Then, again, to the Corinthians the Apostle writes—Brethren, be not children in understanding, howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men*—or, as it might be translated, be perfect; that is, in vigor of righteous understanding be not children, but adults. Then, again, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says—But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age—to them that are *perfect*, the exact Greek is—even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.† This, then, comparing Scripture with Scripture, is the evident meaning of the epithet perfect in the words before us. It does not mean the sinlessly complete and the entirely sanctified. Paul tells us that even he himself was

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* 1 Corinthians xiv. 20. † Hebrews v. 14.

not such an one. And if he was not, we may be sure nobody is in these days of ours, whatever rapture one may be brought into or whatever wild things one may affirm. But this epithet does mean the mature, the thoroughly earnest, those who have some real conception of the tremendous gravity and labor and consequence of the Christian life; those who, beginning to build its tower,* sit down deliberately and count the cost and are willing to pay the cost; those who are not thoughtless, careless, butterfly-chasing children, but are sober, earnest-minded men and women, who know that a good life amid this evil world can mean nothing less than battle, who expect the tough, hard fighting, and are ready for it.

Now, Paul says, let all such deliberate, matured, sensible, steady strugglers get the truest and highest thought about their struggling—*let them be thus minded.* That is to say, let them be of such a mind as the Apostle has been indicating through all the

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* Luke xiv. 28.

stirring, resounding sentences of this third chapter. Let their mind be such a mind as Paul himself has come to have about it. Paul has said that the meaning of the Christian life is, first—*the yielding of everything, that Christ may be supreme*—for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may gain Christ. Let these mature and thorough-going ones be *thus* minded. Paul has said, second—*that gaining Christ, though it yield all for Him, the soul gets in Christ most celestial treasure*—Security, Righteousness, Intimacy, Power, Purity, Victory. Let not, then, these mature and thorough-going perfect ones imagine that in exchanging all for Christ they have made a bootless bargain, but rather, sure that in Christ they have become dowered with inestimable spiritual treasure, let them, concerning that treasure, be *thus* minded. Paul has said, third—*in order that the soul apprehend that for which it was apprehended of Christ Jesus, in order that there be in the personal soul grand and conscious seizure of the wondrous blessings and endowments possible in*

Christ, there must be on that soul's part strenuous and concentrated endeavor toward them—even as Paul says about himself, not thinking I have reached it all, not vainly imagining I am sinlessly complete; this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the high prize of the calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let these mature and thorough-going perfect ones be *thus* minded. Yielding all for Christ, transcendent gain in Christ, battling struggle toward Christ —this was the Apostle's mind concerning the Christian life. And, O ye perfect ones, ye who are no vagrant children swept by impulse, ye who are sure that the Christian life means somewhat, and who mean yourselves to make it mean somewhat, ye who are steady and mature in your purpose of being Christian, be ye, then, concerning the Christian life *thus minded*—grasp concerning it the loftiest and truest thought.

And it is always needful that we get the true thought behind and belonging to en-

deavor in order that we may conqueringly endeavor. In all realms the idea is mother, and the deed is child. And the traits in the thought which s the mother reproduce themselves, as by an iron law, in the deed which is the child. "You think of Watt," as one has said, "and instantly the steam-engine is suggested ; of Arkwright, and the spinning-jenny whirls before you ; of Davy, and the safety-lamp lights up the mine ; of Harvey, and the blood courses the more quickly in your veins ; of Jenner, and you see disease stayed in its progress by the pricking of a lancet ; of Morse, and the electric spark is seen darting from continent to continent, ready to 'put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes.'" But for all these the thought, the clear and high conception was minister to the victorious deed. So also is it the noble conception, the lofty thought of the Christian life, whence an aspiring and triumphant Christian life can spring. If you think the Christian life to be a sweet and sleepy summer afternoon, you will live as though it were. Be thus

minded then, have the Apostle's mind, O Christian struggler—get the truest, strongest, sublimest thought of the present duty and future destiny of that sort of life which Jesus came into the world to implant in men and women. The thought, for it is this—everything yielded *for* Christ, holiest treasure *in* Christ, battling struggle *toward* Christ. And that you be *thus* minded, that you have no other or lower or easier thought of it than this, is the Apostle's first suggestion to the Christian struggler.

Here is the second Apostolic suggestion for the Christian struggler : *Be certain of the helping Divine Illumination*—and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you.

It does not follow, because you may have *generally* the right thought concerning the Christian life, that about this particular and that and that and that and that and that you may not be mistaken. But it does follow that, filled with a high conception of the majesty and the meaning of the Chris-

tian life, and going on in noble struggle to actualize it, you shall receive constantly increasing and correcting light from God. You shall not be as one who stumbles on in the darkness. The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* It is a beautiful suggestion of Lord Bacon, that of the Divine days of Creation, the first day's work was light, the last day's work was still light, and the Sabbath day's work has been ever since only light. The first day's work — physical light, the light of sense, when God said let light be, and light was; the last day's work—the light of reason, when God, creating man, kindled a reflection of His own image in human nature; the Sabbath day's work ever since has been and will be—*the illumination of the Divine Spirit*, and, through its radiance, the nurturing and perfecting of that which is most like God in man. Says Jesus, If any man willeth to do His will he shall know of the doctrine.† If in noble struggle you

* Proverbs iv. 18.

† John vii. 17.

front toward God, albeit the mists of mistakes and sins do hang before your eyes, be you certain that the Divine sunrise shall smite down those mists, that God shall reveal even this unto you. You can not be an unhelped struggler. Catch a moment the same strain from the older Scripture as Hosea sings it—Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.* O friend of mine, in doubt and trouble, whom questions haunt as bad dreams do uneasy sleep, for whose feet perplexities are as tangling as are the interweaving trails in some primeval Western forest, buffeted as you seem to yourself to be by most strange Providences, coming upon difficulties and temptations as invading armies come against unsuspected and frowning breast-works disputing their advance, perhaps just now quite discouraged, and almost on the point

* Hosea vi. 3.

of saying, it is a hard struggle and a weary and I will give in and follow the world's way and let myself be swept into easy evil —Wait a moment, and remember that to brave strugglers God has promised help and light. As He is true, there must come to you the shining of His revealing. Do not yield yet; do not give up. If the struggle is hard, the promise is great. With fresh faith lay grip to this second Apostolic truth for Christian strugglers—*you shall not stay unhelped.* And if in anything ye are otherwise minded—if you are doubtful or mistaken or troubled—even this shall God reveal unto you.

Here is a third Apostolic suggestion for Christian strugglers;—*Do not be a free-lance struggler, a guerilla, one who does his fighting on his own hook**—only, whereunto we have already attained, by the same rule let us walk. Very suggestive is the picture in the Greek here which our English so dimly paints; by that same rule let us *march in*

* Newland's Commentary *in loco.*

order. It is a military picture of going on; not each one for himself, and helter-skelter, but in rank, and each supporting each because they are in rank. And a most legitimate meaning of this suggestion is, I am sure, this—do not think, O struggler, that you can get on without your Brethren, without the marshalled elbow-touch of their companionship; in your struggling, value the most intimate association with Christ's Church.

Needed is a suggestion like this, in these days of hurly-burly and sporadic and unorganized and individual Christian working. But Paul says do not go off as a knight-errant. *March in rank*, value and use your association with the church. And yet how easily now do Christian strugglers allow themselves to become disassociated from the church and degenerate into free-lance strugglers, if indeed, becoming such, they struggle in any wise; and for what flippant reasons.

Here is one who is not noticed in the church, there is not the acquaintanceship,

the smile of welcome, the hand grasp. And that there is not enough of that in any church, I grant. And yet, in forty-nine cases out of every fifty, this unnoticed one is one who will not let himself be noticed, who shoots out of the sanctuary door as a bullet leaves the gun muzzle, who never is present at any of the meetings of the church appointed for the forming of acquaintanceship, who never has sought or even turned toward welcome or hand grasp, and then—drops off, declaring the church an iceberg, and so refuses to march in rank, and becomes a free-lance struggler.

Here is one who allows himself to get disassociated from the church for a pecuniary reason. There never was an army that did not cost, and the Church costs. A minister in Scotland preached a noble sermon on the freeness of the water of life—that it was without money and without price, and then they took up a collection for foreign missions. And one said, the water of life is free, but you must have money to get the pitchers to carry the free water in—and that is true.

But if there be any mean and miserable money-rating of men in a church, if men be ranked simply by their ability of money-giving, if you call men strong or weak, not according to their nobleness of spiritual character, but simply because of the weight of the purses they can carry, why, then—while you may do that in the business street, you are committing heinous and grievous wrong if you do it in Christ's Church. The money test is not the test for the Church of Christ.

But here, on the other hand, is as real and as bad a wrong. Where a man *himself* makes the money reason the reason for the disassociation of himself from the marshalled order of the Church of Christ. If one can not pay, the Church says gladly, we are Brethren and Sisters, you are most welcome to this seat assigned you. But the man says, blinded by a foolish pride, no! and drops off and becomes a free-lance struggler. The Church says, giving is a Christian duty; we do not declare the amount you ought to give, that is for you and

Christ to settle; give what you can and think you ought; the spirit within the widow's mites made them resplendent with the light of Heaven. But the man says, no —because I can not give as much as this one or that other, I am too proud to march in rank at all; and he drops out and degenerates into a free-lance struggler. Ah! to do that—to let yourself fall out of rank from Christ's Church because of the money standard which *you* set up—that, too, is a proud and heinous wrong.

Here is one who has been associated with the church and has removed his residence and has a church letter in his pocket. But he does not present it, and neglecting, after a little, does not care to—and so, after a while, gets among the dropped people and becomes a straggler through neglect. And here is one who goes off on some *individual* mission; puts all time, thought, prayer, attendance into that; calls the church cold and laggard, but never tries himself to make it better; gets to be a fault-finder and a scold, and so again becomes a free-lance

struggler, through a bad zeal prompting to the breaking of covenant vows.

But Paul says—march in order. Value and maintain your association with the church. No free-lance struggler is a strong struggler. He needs the church.

He needs it because he needs to be associated with that which God so highly values. Listen to this enumeration of the names which God has given in the Scriptures to the Church He loves as they have been gathered by an old divine: Assembly of the Saints; Assembly of the Upright; Body of Christ; Branch of God's Planting; Bride of Christ; Church of God; Church of the Living God; Church of the First-born; City of the Living God; Congregation of Saints; Congregation of the Lord's Poor; Dove; Family in Heaven and Earth; Flock of God; Fold of Christ; General Assembly of the First-born; Golden Candlestick; God's Building; God's Husbandry; God's Heritage; Habitation of God; Heavenly Jerusalem; Holy City; Holy Mountain; Holy Hill; House of God; House of the

God of Jacob; House of Christ; House hold of God; Inheritance; Israel of God; King's Daughter; Lamb's Wife; Lot of God's Inheritance; Mount Zion; Mountain of the Lord of Hosts; Mountain of the Lord's House; New Jerusalem; Pillar and Ground of the Truth; Place of God's Throne; Pleasant Portion; Sanctuary of God; Sister of Christ; Spiritual House; Spouse of Christ; Strength and Glory of God; Sought out, a City not forsaken; Tabernacle; The Lord's Portion; Temple of God; Temple of the Living God; Vineyard.*

You can not afford to be disassociated from that which God so honors and so loves

And a Christian struggler also needs the Church, because he needs the elbow-touch and heartening of Brethren and Sisters pressing on in the same high war. The communion of the saints, the gathered prayers and praises of the sanctuary, the

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* Bate.

orderly instruction from the Divine Word, the social interchange of Christian thought and experience and prayer in the weekly prayer-meeting — such stimulants and encouragements as these the Christian struggler needs and must have, if he would battle well and bravely. Receive then this third apostolic suggestion for the Christian struggler. Whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us *march in order.* Do not be a free-lance struggler.

Here is a last suggestion for the Christian struggler: *Emulate the loftiest examples* — Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark—intently regard—them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. They are not all Israelites who are of Israel; it is not true that there is no seeming in the Church of Christ; there are those who, entering the arena, do not run; who, swearing allegiance, do not go on in the holy war—I have told you often of them, says the Apostle, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

As one explains : "The humbling, softening transforming power of that Cross they know not, and they do not care to know ; its unselfishness, its unworldliness, its holiness, its mortification of the flesh, its substitution of the future for the p esent, of the unseen for the visible, of Heaven for earth, is a mere riddle or a mere offence to them ; they belong to this life, where their heart and their affection and their treasure is."* Their mind is earthly, their god is the pitiable passing worldly appetite and pleasure, their end is perdition. There are such even among those who profess to be Christian strugglers.

But, O genuine Christian struggler, why should you choose to follow them? Why should you say, he is a member of the church and he does bad or questionable things, therefore I may do them. Not so. Intently regard them which walk even as ye have us for an ensample, says the Apos-

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* "Lectures on the Philippians," by Dr. Vaughan. p. 266.

tle. Copy the highest. That is the only rule for getting toward the highest.

Some say that his face glowed crimson and his eye flashed fire, as, for the first time, he gazed upon a masterpiece of Raphael, and exclaimed, "I, too, am a painter." And the tender radiance of the Holy Night, where, held in the Virgin's arms, the light streams from the Holy Child as from a celestial center, making earth's darkness glorious, was possible for Correggio, because he turned admiring and transcribing gaze upon the St. Cecelia of Raphael. The way to reach the highest is to copy from the highest.

Receive, then, O Christian Struggler, this last suggestion from the great Apostle. Disdain to imitate those who only sadly dishonor and misrepresent the Christian life. Emulate, rather, the loftiest examples, and determine to reach yourself what they have reached.

CHAPTER XIV.

REASONS FOR STANDING FAST.

IT is in these verses that the Apostle plies these Philippian Christians with wonderful and weighty reasons, amid what oppositions and discouragements soever, for *standing fast in the Lord*:

For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. *Therefore*—the word points backward to what the Apostle has just been saying—my Brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*

"Sœvis tranquillus in undis—never more placid than when the storm was wildest and

* Philippians iii. 20, 21, and iv. 1.

the night darkest," writes Mr. Motley of that steadiest of heroes, William the Silent, Prince of Orange. Under the leadership of his brother, and in a battle against the fighting of which just then the Prince had earnestly counselled, the forces of the tyrannous Philip the Second had won a sweeping victory. The skies were black and the waves were wild, and the little ship of the Dutch Republic was in sad stress. But the steady hero has no other thought than that of standing fast. "Nevertheless, since it has thus pleased God," he writes to his brother, "it is necessary to have patience, and to lose not courage; conforming ourselves to His Divine will, as, for my part, I have determined to do in everything which may happen, *still proceeding onward in our work with His Almighty aid.*" * Which is an illustration of the Apostolic meaning, when he exhorts these Philippian Christians to stand fast in the Lord.

Here is a page from the Roman historian,

* Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic," Eng. ed., p. 408.

Tacitus. Rome had been devastated by fire. It was the general belief that the Emperor Nero himself had set the torch. By many methods he had tried to ward away the tremendous unpopularity springing from the action. And Tacitus goes on to say—"But not all the relief that could come from man, nor the bounties of the Prince, nor the atonements offered to the gods, relieved Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration. Therefore, in order to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt and punished with the most exquisite tortures those persons who, hated for their crimes, were commonly called Christians. And in their deaths they were made the subjects of sport, for they were covered with the hides of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and when day declined were burned to serve for nocturnal lights." Which persecution did not indeed break out until some years after the writing of this Epistle to the Philippians, but the account of which

serves easily enough to show the kind of light in which the Christians were getting to be looked at, and the immense and often torturing difficulty of standing fast in the Lord.

This phrase, standing fast, is quite a favorite one with the Apostle. They are steady, robust, unswayed, pillar-like Christians he is anxious for. Stand fast in the faith, he writes to the Corinthians.* Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,† he writes to the Galatians. For now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord,‡ he breaks out in his first letter to the Thessalonians. And in his second letter to them he strikes the old note again. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.§ It was not of circumstances or of difficulties these early Christians were to take account; whether of schisms and parties in the

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* 1 Corinthians xvi. 13. † Galatians i. 5.

‡ 1 Thessalonians iii. 8. § 2 Thessalonians ii. 15.

church as among the Corinthians, or of enslaving sacramentarian doctrines as among the Galatians, or of various tribulation as among the Thessalonians, or of pitch-smearings and midnight burnings as soon came to be the fact among the Romans, or of dogs and evil-workers and bad teachings of the concision as among the Philippians. Their simple and foremost duty was, against all and amidst all, to stand fast in the Lord.

And the injunction is neither obsolete nor needless toward ourselves in these latter days. While Christianity has largely conquered the world, it has by no means yet transfigured it. That it is impossible to be Christian and do business is not an unusual rumor wafted now about the streets of trade. It is not so rare to-day to hear it said, that it is fine and cultured and liberal and according to the spirit of the age and scientific, to be sure that Christ is no more than a Socrates or a Plato or a Shakespeare, and that the Scriptures are only "old Jew stars burned out." The flesh and the Devil have not

yet ceased their fascinations. Demas, who forsook the Gospel for the love of this present world, did not die leaving no family behind him. Though there are now no Sanhedrims whose blows are stones crashing down upon a steadfast Stephen, there are Sanhedrims of fashionable scorn and bad and deft expediencies, and easy-going self-indulgences, and pernicious pleasures, and simply worldly ideals of life. To stand fast in the Lord—in the secret places of the inner self, in the shelter of the home, in the open paths of the daily business, in the rounds of social intercourse, in the thronging temptations of a great city, in the devious ways of political endeavor—has not become so common and popular a thing, in these days of ours, as to need no strenuous incitement toward it. The Yellowstone River flows into the Missouri, and the Missouri into the Mississippi, and the Mississippi into the Gulf; and a vessel caught in the grasp of the downward current, and starting from Fort Keogh on the Yellowstone, can make the vast distance to the Gulf in a comparatively short period.

But to start from the Gulf and struggle upward to Fort Keogh is an immensely longer and harder thing. The great world-currents set mainly downward still, and to be Christian, even in these latter days, is to work up stream.

Therefore, stand fast in the Lord, my dearly Beloved. The word Therefore suggests reasons. And the Scripture leading up to the Therefore is full of most stirring and stringent and heart-helping reasons for standing fast in the Lord.

This, then, is the thought for our chapter —*the Apostolic reasons for a Christian steadfastness.*

This is the first reason: Stand fast in the Lord *because you possess a Heavenly Citizenship.* For our conversation—more correctly, according to the New Version, citizenship—is in Heaven.

Very different was the Apostle really from that which he was supposed to be by those Roman prætors at Philippi, in those days of persecution out of which sprang this Phi-

lippian church. You remember how it was After Paul, preaching God's evangel in that city, a poor, possessed, crazed maiden followed with wild speech. She was the slave of men who, from the superstitious rabble, filched large gains through her incoherent words and senseless ravings. At length Paul, in the name of Jesus Christ, commanded the raging demon to come out of her, and the sunlight of a sweet and maidenly sanity fell on and filled that troubled and darkened soul. But the masters, cruel with greed, were angry. They stirred up a tumult through the city. And, gripped by a mob, the Apostle was dragged into the presence of the prætors. They, thinking him but some miserable disturber, would disdainfully waste no time on him in investigation or in trial; but on the bared back of the Apostle commanded the lictors at once to lay the furrowing stripes. Then Paul and Silas were thrust into the inner prison, and, with their feet made fast in stocks, were specially committed to the mercilessness of the Roman jailer. But God shook

the prison in the midnight, and the hard heart of the jailer even was melted at the vision of the Crucified.

But those prætors knew not what they did when they scourged and imprisoned Paul. All the time he had been in a citizenship before the majesty of which no lawless scourge might lift itself, nor upon whose simple and crowned dignity no swift, unlawful incarceration might shut its iron doors. He was immensely more than he had seemed. Those proud prætors had thought him criminal; but, in their hurried and illegal scourging and imprisonment, they had made themselves coweringly criminal before the awful might of the Roman law. "I am no poor colonist; I am no thralled and helpless captive; I am no undefended waif or slave, who can have neither will nor rights, and for whom there are no courts nor orderly tribunals. I am among those who possess the lordliest and most coveted distinction. I am guarded and dignified by imperial authority. Poor and helpless as I seem, I am lifted and mighty and ennobled

in the citizenship which I possess. I will stand in that, I will walk worthily of that, I will not disgrace that, I will demand the rights appropriate to that," Paul could say. "They have beaten us openly and uncondemned, and now do they cast us out privily? Nay, verily, but let the prætors come themselves and fetch us out.* *Civis Romanus sum*—I am a Roman citizen," the Apostle could say to the now cringing prætors.

So does the poorest and the humblest and the most bestormed and the most buffeted and the most tempted and the most lonely and the most sorrowful and the most unnoticed and the most heart-sick and the most (measured by worldly standards) unsuccessful Christian stand in a citizenship, compared with which that lordly one of ancient Rome or any men can confer to-day is but as the flash of the glow-worm to the sun at noon. He is immensely more than he may seem. He is dowered with that citizenship, not as something which is to

* Acts xvi. 37.

come, but as that with which he is now ennobled. For our citizenship *is* in Heaven. The glorious rights and privileges and immunities of the Sons of God are not simply *to be* his, but are his *now*. He that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life.* Eternal life is the Christian's now. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.† The Christian possesses freedom from condemnation now. And if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.‡ The Christian is joint-heir with Christ now. Because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.§ The Christian is in alliance with the Mighty One now. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours ; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.‖ The Christian is possessor of illimitable treasure now.

Somewhere I have heard of a picture

* John iii. 36.
† Romans viii. 1.
‡ Romans viii. 17.
§ 1 John iv. 4.
‖ 1 Corinthians iii. 22, 23

which, looked at in the usual light, shows you nothing more than the figure of a wearied and defeated pilgrim stretched in his last sickness on a straw pallet in the poorest sort of a city garret. But when you look at the picture in the light the artist meant, you see that above the head of that outcast and dying man the air is all athrong with angels, and the down-streaming light from the upper city is pointing out the pathway thither. The first sight shows you what the man seems; the second reveals to you what he really is—in what sort of a citizenship he is genuinely held.

Because then your citizenship is in Heaven; because you belong to a realm other than the passing and the earthly; because already you catch foretastes of its joys and glimpses of its brightness; because you are even now crowned with the dignity of the Sons of God; because though in the sight of men you may seem to be but earth's poorest peasant, yet in the sight of God are really a member of the selectest nobility of the universe, therefore stand fast in the

Lord, my dearly beloved; rejoice in the privileges of that citizenship; damage not its dignity by a wavering and staining worldliness; walk worthily of its glorious and transcendent majesty. Stand fast in the Lord. Even as Augustine says upon this very Scripture: "Already in longing we are there; already hope into that land, as it were an anchor, we have sent before, lest in this sea being tossed we suffer shipwreck. As of a ship which is at anchor we rightly say that already she is come to land, and hath been in a manner brought to it safe in the teeth of winds and in the teeth of storms; so against the temptations of this sojourning our hope being grounded in that city, Jerusalem, causeth us not to be carried away upon the rocks." *

Here is the second Apostolic reason for a Christian steadfastness. Stand fast in the Lord, *because in Heaven you have a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who surely regards you*

* Quoted in "Newland's Con mentary," *in loco.*

and will come to you. From whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gather for a moment the inspiration stirring in these crowding titles of our Lord—Saviour; Lord; Jesus; Christ. Names mean much in Scripture. *The Lord*—that is Jehovah, the I Am, the Unconditioned, the Supreme, the Absolute Ruler, before whom the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; Who taketh up the isles as a very little thing. Christ is He, and we have Him in Heaven.

Christ—that is Messiah, the Anointed One, the High-Priest of our profession, Who is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to *appear in the presence of God for us; who ever liveth to make intercession for us.* Christ is He, and we have Him in Heaven.

Jesus—that is the Deliverer, the true Joshua, of whom the earthly Joshua was but a poor and partial type—the leader into our heavenly inheritance, and the fighter of our

battles. Christ is He, and we have Him in Heaven.

Saviour—that is the One who saves, whose mighty mission is the eternal safety of His people. Christ is He, and we have Him in Heaven.

But we do not have this Supreme Sovereign and interceding High-Priest and Complete Deliverer and Infinite Saviour as One *shut away* in the Heavens, distant from us by chasm measureless and careless of us. We wait for Him. We wait for Him as Mary and Martha waited for His coming from Jerusalem when the evening shadows fell, and His work of teaching for that day was finished in the Temple when He was in the flesh. We wait for Him, sure as they were of His personal and specializing love for us, and certain of His coming.

Even now He comes through the ministration of the Holy Spirit — the omnipresent Christ—"a Christ," as one has said, 'whom no distance can remove, whom the sick man can have in his chamber, the prisoner in his dungeon, the exile in his

place of banishment, the martyr in his fires, present to the heart, more present than looks or words; present when the eye is blind and can not see Him, and the ear is deaf and can not hear Him speak. And yet the consciously-felt Christ. 'The world seeth me not, but ye see me.'" *

Even more really shall He come in the death-hour. When in this order of succession as they always do, the senses yield. The sight first. "Do you know me?" asked a friend of Senator Sumner, when he lay dying. "Yes," was the reply, "but I can not see you"; the taste next, there is no longer reply of delicate nerve of taste to cordial or to medicine; the sense of smell next, the reviving cologne or camphor can no more be recognized; the hearing next, the words of love fall on utterly unresponding ears; the touch last, that hand you hold does not feel yours, those lips must henceforth be careless of your kiss;†—when one by one, and in such order the senses broken

* Dr. Bushnell, "Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 80.

† "Intermediate World," by Townsend, p. 198.

down by death give way, and like a vessel which has slipped her moorings one by one, the soul begins its voyage out into the infinite unknown; our Lord and Priest and Deliverer and Saviour whom we have in Heaven, comes with closer and directer presence to bless us with His welcome, and to conduct us to His glory. Said the mother of John Wesley, just before the Christ for whom she waited came to her in triumphant death: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a Psalm of praise to God." As another asks, "What better could the children do?"

And yet more mightily and really shall this Christ come in His flaming and glorious Second Advent. When or altogether how I can not tell you—but for His waiting Church He shall surely come. In His celestial and overcoming splendor the world shall see that He is veritably King and Judge and Saviour, and in that triumph His saints shall share.

Therefore, since you have in Heaven such a Christ—Ruler, Priest, Deliverer, Saviour;

since you may be certain of His personal and regarding love, since in answer to your expectant waiting He comes, now in the presence of the Holy Spirit, and will come in death, and will come for your utmost triumph in His Advent, therefore stand fast in such a Lord, my dearly beloved. Be not waverers. Be not faint-hearted. Be not caught in the wiles of the Devil. Be not false to your profession. Hold fast to your profession. Stand fast in the Lord.

Here is the third Apostolic reason for a Christian steadfastness. Stand fast in the Lord *because you are the subjects of a transcendent and all-inclusive Redemption*; who shall change our vile body—as the New Version has it better, the body of our humiliation—that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

For, the Redemption which Jesus brings us is not in any sense a partial one. It does not save a fragment of us. It does not draw its glorious circle around the soul alone, leaving the body to condemnation

and dishonor. It draws its glorious circle around the body together with the soul. It crowns and graces every part of us. It ennobles us in our totality. It is a Redemption *all*-inclusive.

Too little vivid in the Christian thought and expectation of our day is this whole Resurrection side of our Lord's immense and wonderful Redemption. Too much thin and vague and intangible and ghostly is our idea of the supernal shining to which He beckons us. Too little do we clothe it with the stately denseness and reality of the Scripture. For in that illustrious future we are to be more than aerial mists of being transfigured by the heavenly splendor, like spectral clouds made golden in a summer sunset; we are to be distinct, tangible, embodied personalities, solid beings in a solid and substantial Heaven.

Now we are in the body of our humiliation—more body and less spirit, charged with the body's care that we may live at all, obliged to feed it and to tend it and to clothe and to house it; setting in motion

enormous industries that we may make it comfortable; with only here and there a little chink of chance for the cultivation of our spirits, so imperious and tyrannical is our body in its demands; anxious as we must be, though we are only anxious in the Scripture sense, concerning what we shall eat and what we shall drink and wherewithal we shall be clothed. Too much in this time of our humiliation is the Spirit the body's thrall.

Now we are in the body of our humiliation. We are strong in youth and vigorous in middle life, but old age comes on apace. Then, too, disease enfeebles us and racks us and thwarts us. Then, also, as another says: "Here, at the very best, the body comes far short of answering the demands made upon it by one who would walk worthy of the kingdom and glory to which he is called. He would wish to serve God day and night in His Temple, but the very alternations of day and night impose upon him the necessity of sleep. Like his Divine Master he would wish to go about continu-

ally doing good, but the feet refuse to carry him, and the hands that were raised to bless fall powerless by his side. At every step of his progress he would lift his heart into the presence-chamber of the Great King; but the deeper the intensity of his feelings, the sooner does the bodily constitution decline to endure the strain. Down to the last moment of our earthly existence we bear about with us a body which hampers the soul in its aspirations; and often, when the visions of Heaven are just about to burst upon the eye and the ear, the one is blind to every sight and the other deaf to every sound. There is a law in the members that warreth with the law of the mind. O wretched men that we are! who shall deliver us out of this body of death?"* And then at last, and so sadly soon, old age manacles with its decrepitude, the keepers of the house tremble, the grinders cease because they are few, they that look out of the windows are darkened, the grasshopper

* "The Resurrection of our Lord," by Prof. Milligan, p. 186.

is a burden, desire fails, or ever the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.* Before the end comes, before the snapping of the silver cord, what shadows of the end appear, in trembling limbs and toothless jaws and dimmed vision and childlike weakness and smouldering purpose and ability.

Now we are in the body of our humiliation. It is the seat of passion. It is the inlet of temptations. It is the *rebellious* subject.

Now we are in the body of our humiliation. We are earth-born and anchored to the earth. *We are the captives of place and circumstance.* Yonder soars the eagle, but we have no wings. Yonder burn the stars, but we can not visit them. *We are the prisoners of natural law.* We can not bid gravity let go of us. We can not say to the waves, be still and make a calm. We can not pro-

* Ecclesiastes xii. 3.

vide against destroying accident from our best servants, steam and fire and electricity Our sovereignty over natural law is at best but partial. We are more servants than we are masters, vast as our mastership may seem to be. *We are dull in all our senses.* Ten thousand wonders troop above us and around us of which we are utterly unconscious. Telescopes must aid our vision into the far. Microscopes must sharpen our vision into the near. Now we are in the body of our humiliation, anchored, hindered, circumscribed, confined.

But then—when all the processes of Redemption shall have culminated in the Resurrection we shall find that we shall not have been saved as to our souls simply, but as to our bodies also. Every part of us shall be dignified with its splendor. The body of our humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body. We catch glimpses of what that body is amid the flashes of the post-Resurrection life of our Lord Jesus. *It is a body independent of tyrannous and physical needs.* No more after the

Resurrection did Jesus eat *with* the disciples, but only now and then *before* them, that they might know He was veritably Himself. He was no longer under law to such physical necessities. *It is a body unwearied, undiseased, and vigorous with an eternal youth.* No longer did He sink exhausted on the cool well-curb in the Samaritan noon-heats; no longer was He so drenched in sleep on a rower's cushion that winds and waves let loose could not awaken Him.

It is a body the absolute servant of the Spirit which no forty days' fast can weaken, and along whose cravings no temptation of turning stones to bread can come soliciting.

It is a body unanchored, not held to this place or to that—doors which the fear of Jews had bolted are no hindrance to it. From the wondering sight of the disciples at Emmaus it can vanish while they gazed, and in the Ascension it is the buoyant and easy master of an all-dominating gravity.

And of what that body is now in Heaven we may catch some slight glimpses from the dazzling symbolic vision of the Revelator

on Patmos, when he saw the Christ in the dignity of His snowy hairs, and in the youth and energy and far-darting brilliancy of His flaming eyes, and in the strength of His glowing feet like unto fine brass, as if they were resplendent in a furnace, and in the authority of His high speech steady and resistless as the murmurs of the mighty sea.* But the very labor of the vision shows how beyond conception is the glory. Who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body?

> "Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
> But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
> On those bright steps that heavenward raise
> Their practicable way.
> Come forth, ye drooping old men, look around,
> And see to what fair countries ye are bound."†

Who shall change it, fashion it anew, transform it?—the word is startlingly transfiguring. That shall not be this poor body of flesh and blood—flesh and blood can not

* Revelation i. 14, 15. † Wordsworth.

inherit the kingdom of God. That shall not be this poor body of corruption—it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. That shall not be this poor body of the present earthly realm—let this turn to dust, let the worm fatten on it, let the grass absorb it, let it pass off in gases—it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. Bearing some mysterious and undiscoverable and unrevealed relation to this, that shall be a body other, a body different, a body fitted to the highest uses and facile to the touch and monition of the glorified and redeemed spirit, and yet so real a body that it shall be seen that in His great Redemption our Lord lifts the entire man—spirit, soul, and *body*—into utmost share with His own glorious triumph. As He slays sin for us, so will He slay death for us. There shall be no least and last thralldom which He shall not shatter for us. Do you not see, then, how it must be that the Lord Christ saves your *entire personality*, holds sacred every portion of it, and how faithless and needless, then, is that question with which

you sometimes torture yourself when the shadows fall and the cradle is empty—asking yourself, will my child *know* me yonder and I my child? Why, to its last limit, even to its body, fashioning it anew like unto His glorious body, Christ saves that identical child, and will save you. You are not saved a fragment. You are not part saved and part destroyed. You are wholly saved. In that "full, personal, undivided life," of course, you must be recognizable by others and recognizing them.

Therefore, since you may be the subject of such a transcendent and inclusive Redemption, do not miss it by wavering, do not fail of it by apostasy, do not endanger it by a poor worldliness. Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly Beloved.

Here is the fourth reason for a Christian steadfastness: Stand fast in the Lord, *because there is on your side and active for you power infinite*—according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

Rowland Hill tells how once a wealthy man, desiring to do an act of benevolence, sent a large sum of money to a friend, asking him to disburse the sum to a certain needy one as he thought best. This friend sent the poor man five pounds, and in his note to him said: "This is thine, use it wisely, there is more to follow." After a while he sent another five pounds, and said again, "More to follow." Again, and still again, and still again, and on and on and on he sent the money, and always with this message—"More to follow."

And so in the wondrous and redemptive Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ there is always *more to follow.*

You stagger and wonder at this vast Redemption which shall so utterly save you as to include your body even, fashioning anew the body of your humiliation like unto His glorious body—why, that shall not exhaust the power of the Lord who loves you. There is *more to follow*—according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue ALL THINGS unto Himself.

Mr. Spurgeon tells how, wearied and discouraged, he was walking homeward once by the banks of the river Thames. There were obstacles before him very great, and just then he was faithless. And just then a little fish seemed to speak to him out of the waters, and say, "See, I am going to drink the river dry." Then Mr. Spurgeon was girded again and full of conquering courage, for how could he drink God dry any more than the little fish could drink dry the Thames. *Able even to subdue all things.* Is it not worth our while to stand fast in such a Lord?

CHAPTER XV.

AT VARIANCE.

In a valley, centuries ago,
Grew a little fern-plant green and slender,
Veining delicate, and fibres tender,
Waving in the wind crept down so low;
Rushes tall, and moss, and grass grew round it;
Playful sunbeams darted in and found it;
Drops of dew stole down by night and crowned it;
But no foot of man e'er came that way;
Earth was young and keeping holiday.

Monster fishes swam the silent main,
Stately forests waved their giant branches,
Mountains hurled their snowy avalanches,
Mammoth creatures stalked across the plain;
Nature reveled in grand mysteries;
But the little fern was not of these,
Did not number with the hills and trees,
Only grew and waved in sweet, wild way—
No one came to note it day by day.

Earth, one time, put on a frolic mood,
Heaved the rocks, and changed the mighty motion

Of the deep, strong currents of the ocean;
Moved the plain, and shook the haughty wood,
Crushed the little fern in soft, moist clay,
Covered it, and hid it safe away.
O the long, long centuries since that day!
O the changes! Oh, life's bitter cost!
Since the useless little fern was lost.

"Useless? Lost? There came a thoughtful man,
Searching Nature's secrets far and deep;
From a fissure, in a rocky steep,
He withdrew a stone, o'er which there ran
Fairy pencillings, a quaint design,
Leafage, veining, fibres, clear and fine,
And the fern's life lay in every line!
So, I think, God hides some souls away
Sweetly to surprise us, the last day." *

I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee also, true yoke-fellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers whose names are in the book of life." †

AND in this Scripture we have an instance of the truth of the poet's words—Euodia and Syntyche, just their names and

* Mary Bolles Branch.

† Philippians iv. 2, 3, Revised Version.

with the marking of a characteristic or two, lying here for our inspection and instruction on this slight ledge of Scripture. We do not know who Euodia and Syntyche were. They are elsewhere never mentioned. We only know their names and one or two fragmentary things about them. But even as the imprint of the fern tells the thoughtful man searching Nature's secrets much, so these faint traces of lives which went out long ago will tell us much for these lives of ours, if we will wait in somewhat earnest thought as we gaze upon them.

So will you notice first that these names, Euodia and Syntyche, are *the names of women.*

And here at once comes before us the mighty and momentous fact that it has always been and is a peculiar purpose of our Lord's Gospel to lift woman into high and honorable place ; to cause to be recognized her sweet dignity and her intrinsic equality with man. It would not be fitting to tell into ears made rightly sensitive by the pure thoughts and pure homes which

are the results and heritage of centuries of Christianity, the depraved and oppressed state of woman even amid the consummate bloomings of the proud civilizations of Greece and Rome. But the moment Christianity appears you begin to see a difference. Christ's Gospel was the opened gate for woman into purity and honor, and recognized and noble service. The Gospel lifts the wife from slave to helpmeet. The Gospel sets the bars of awful sanction round the family. The Gospel places the feet of woman upon the paths of bounteous and benignant service, in every way as honorable as anything given by the Gospel to man to do. Coming into the presence of the Gospel, at once you think how the birth of Jesus hallowed womanhood and motherhood, and of the holy women who reverently ministered to our Lord Christ in the days of His flesh. And it is surprising, if you will take the trouble to search your New Testament, how constantly the great Apostle to the Gentiles was dependent upon the faith and fidelity and unwearied serv-

ice of Christian women. You will remember that the first convert, and so the beginning of this very Philippian church, was Lydia, a woman, and how immediately her new-found faith began to flow out into womanly service, as she opened her house for the residence and refreshment of Paul and Silas.* From Philippi the Apostle went to Thessalonica, and there, among the chief women not a few,† he found his earliest adherents. Then Athens becomes the place of his ministry, and Damaris, a woman,‡ is specified among the converts. Then from the moral filth of Corinth he begins to gather to the pure Christ, and Chloe § and Priscilla ‖ and Phœbe ¶ are among his converts and most valuable helpers. Then turn to the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and see how, in the Apostle's thoughtful recognition of special persons, the names of women stand in equal num-

* Acts xvi. 15.
† Acts xvii. 4.
‡ Acts xvii. 34.
§ 1 Corinthians i. 11.
‖ Acts xviii. 2.
¶ Romans xvi. 1.

ber and on equal plane with men. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us,* he says. Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord.† Salute Persis the beloved, which labored much in the Lord.‡ Salute Julia and the sister of Nereus.§ And here in this Epistle to the Philippians, written afterward from Rome, we find the names of these other Christian women, Euodia and Syntyche.

And I am very sure that we miss much in our Protestant Christianity, reacting into the custom doubtless from the bad Romish sisterhoods and all the evils which spring out of celibate and secret nunneries ; I am sure that we miss much in our Protestant Christianity through not giving to woman a distinct and special place among the office-bearers of the church. I believe thoroughly in a female Diaconate. Writes Paul to the Romans, I commend unto you Phœbe, our Sister, who is a *servant* of the church at Cenchrea‖—the New Version puts into the

* Romans xvi. 6. † Romans xvi. 12. ‡ Ditto.
§ Romans xvi. 15 ‖ Romans xvi. 1, 2.

margin, *Deaconess*—that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you : for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also. Servant of the church or Deaconess, succorer of the Apostle—does not that sound something like official recognition? Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre. According to the New Version—*Women* in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.* Not a word about pastors' wives, as such, in any way, though there is a good deal said about pastors; not a word about Deacons' wives, as such, as the old version has it; but very careful words about the "*Women*"—that is, I am very sure, the *Official Women, the Deaconesses.* It will be a good day, I think, for all our Protestant churches when, coequal with the Board of Deacons chosen from the men, there shall be a Board of Deaconesses chosen from the women, giving them thus

* 1 Timothy iii. 8 12.

official place and service and recognition. That was done in primitive and Apostolic times.

So, then, these two women, Euodia and Syntyche, specially named and specially prominent in this Philippian church, are significant of the fact that our Lord's Gospel means toward woman deliverance and honor, and the sweet and gentle and persuasive service appropriate to her nature, and which no rougher and clumsier man can begin to do as well.

Will you notice, in the second place, that these two women, Euodia and Syntyche, were women whose lives have left through all the centuries *this noble trace, that, rescued by their Lord, they were not unmindful of their duty toward Him; but that for His sake their lives flowed out in service.* These women which *labored with me* in the Gospel—it is thus Paul speaks of them. This trace of a holy service in the Gospel has come down to us. Of the sort of service we are not told, but we see plainly this imprint of per-

sonal service of some sort gladly rendered. "'Thou didst not disdain that thy only begotten Son should be born of a woman,' says the consecrating prayer for Deaconesses in the ancient church. This fact, the birth of the Son of God from a woman, gave to woman a new position"*—and to this new place and chance Euodia and Syntyche were faithful with much labor.

And their labor was not lost. Labor in the Gospel never is. It left its imprint there on helped souls. It has left its imprint here in Scripture. Here is comfort for the lowliest worker. A life full of service in the Gospel must mean much. Though it be caught by no written recognition, its results go on. Duty done is blessing started and flowing forth. No better epitaph for anybody possible than this—"Labored much in the Lord." In this respect let us seek to emulate Euodia and Syntyche.

But will you go on to notice a third thing concerning Euodia and Syntyche, and a sad

* Ulhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," p. 177.

thing with which their names must be associated as long as Scripture lasts. Sometimes the imprint of the fern is jagged and twisted. There is a sorry twist in this imprint which these Christian women have left. *They were at variance.* Writes the Apostle, I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord. But they were not. They needed beseeching to become such. *Christians at variance*—that is the mournful imprint they have left. And the trouble is, there are a good many Christians still who have left and will leave an imprint similar.

Remember how constant is the insistance of the Scripture on the necessity of unity among the members of a church of Christ; how it exhorts Christians to be of the same mind,* of one mind,† one spirit,‡ knit together,§ builded together,‖ striving together,¶ joined perfectly together;** how it

* Philippians iv. 2.
† 1 Peter iii. 8.
‡ Philippians i. 27.
§ Colossians ii. 2.
‖ Ephesians ii. 22.
¶ Philippians i. 27.
** 1 Corinthians i. 10

speaks of them as fellow-citizens,* fellow-heirs,† fellow-helpers,‡ fellow-laborers,§ fellow-servants,‖ fellow-soldiers,¶ fellow-workers.**

But this beautiful, strong, conquering unity Euodia and Syntyche had broken.

Consider some of the causes which may have broken this Divinely-ordered Unity. There are none stated, indeed; but, inasmuch as the human heart is apt to be quite the same in all ages, it is not difficult to imagine the causes.

A too quick belief of an evil rumor may have made Euodia and Syntyche of different minds. Some one translates Virgil's description of rumor thus: "Rumor, than which no evil is swifter, thrives by movement, and increases her strength in going. Small at first, and timid, soon she raises herself into the air, and strides over the ground, and buries her

* Ephesians ii. 19.
† Ephesians iii. 6.
‡ 3 John viii.
§ Philemon 23.
‖ Colossians i. 7; Revelation vi. 11.
¶ Philippians ii. 25.
** Colossians iv. 11.

head in the clouds. Swift of foot and of untiring wing, she is a frightful huge monster, who has many watchful eyes, as many tongues, as many mouths, and as many ears as she has feathers on her body. By night she flies between heaven and earth, rustling through the darkness, and never closes her eyes in peaceful slumber; by day she sits as a watcher upon the highest roof, or upon lofty towers, and alarms great cities; *for she is as fond of announcing that which is false and distorted as that which is true.*" O how many an Euodia and Syntyche have been estranged by a too easily believed evil rumor.

" Said Mrs. A.
To Mrs. J.,
In quite a confidential way,
'It seems to me
That Mrs. B.
Takes too much—something—in her tea.'
And Mrs. J.
To Mrs. K.
That night was overheard to say—
She grieved to touch
Upon it much,
But 'Mrs. B. took—such and such '

Then Mrs. K.
Went straight away
And told a friend, the self-same day,
''Twas sad to think'—
Here came a wink—
'That Mrs. B. was fond of drink.'
The friend's disgust
Was such, she must
Inform the lady 'whom she nursed,'
That Mrs. B.,
At half-past three,
Was 'that far gone, she couldn't see!

"This lady we
Have mentioned, she
Gave needlework to Mrs. B.,
And at such news
Could scarcely choose
But further needlework refuse.
Then Mrs. B.,
As you'll agree,
Quite properly—she said, said she,
That she would track
The scandal back
To those who made her look so black
Through Mrs. K.
And Mrs. J.
She got at last to Mrs. A.,
And asks her why,
With cruel lie,
She painted her so deep a dye?

Said Mrs. A.,
In sore dismay,
'*I no such thing could ever say;*
I said that you
Had stouter grew
On too much sugar—which you do!'"

Well, I think it would have been better for Mrs. A. not to have said even that about Mrs. B. If she chose to drink sweet tea, she had a perfect right to. But if things go as they are often sadly apt to, I am afraid Mrs. A. and Mrs. J. and Mrs. B. and Mrs. K. will henceforth have all beautiful, neighborly, Christian Unity broken between them, through a too quick belief in and a bad giving wing to evil rumor.

I have read of it as a true story, that the rumor was all over town that the minister had been beating his wife. There could be no doubt about it. Mrs. S. lived next door, and about ten o'clock at night she heard a shriek—a woman's shriek—from a room in the parsonage. Mrs. S. looked out, and there, plainly shadowed on the drawn curtain, she saw a man and a woman running about the

room in great excitement, the man striking with a stick ; Mrs. S. heard the blows, and as the man struck, the woman screamed.

Well, Mrs. S. could hardly sleep that night. She welcomed the morning. She got through her breakfast as soon as possible, and then she put on her things and started out—to see the minister and his wife? O, no. She went straight to Elder A.'s, found the family at breakfast, breathlessly told them the news, then she posted to Deacon C.'s, and thence half over the town, scattering the rumor everywhere.

Well, by noon everybody in the town had heard of it, and naturally there were great stirrings. How disgraceful it was in the minister. Such conduct could not be endured. Something must be done. The officers of the church met and discussed the matter. What should be done? Call at once on the minister and his wife, and, in a friendly way, inquire about it? No, that would not be dignified ; that would not be official. Besides, there could be no possible doubt about the fact. Mrs. S. saw the beat-

ing with her own very eyes. So they determined to do this dignified and official thing. They would call a meeting of the church session, they would summon the minister to answer to the charge of unministerial conduct, they would summon the wife as the witness in the case.

Well, the session was called in due form and order; the summons were sent out; the minister and his wife, much perplexed, attended; and the senior elder gravely stated the terrible case.

Then it all came out. The parsonage had been for some time unoccupied. While it was empty the rats had taken up their quarters in it. That night a huge rat had run under the bed. The minister's wife, who loved her husband very much, and the whole Parish too, did not like rats. What woman does? When she saw the rat she screamed. What woman wouldn't? When her husband caught up a stick and missed the rat, she screamed again. What woman wouldn't? As her husband struck at the rat she ran around the room. What woman

wouldn't do that? It must have been a very funny sight to a neighbor looking at them through the curtains. Well, as the story goes on, the church session were in a sad fix. They blamed Mrs. S. for making such fools of them. They asked her, "Why didn't you go over to the minister's and make sure of the matter before you reported it?" And she retorted, "Why didn't you go and inquire into it before you called a meeting?"

And henceforth Mrs. S. and the session, and possibly the minister—though I am quite sure he and his wife are much too wise to do anything but heartily laugh over the whole matter—are not of the same mind.

Then, again, *a simple misunderstanding springing from forgetfulness or from some other of the constant infirmities to which flesh is heir, may have alienated Euodia and Syntyche.* How easily a misunderstanding may spring up. I have read somewhere a most suggestive incident concerning Lord Macaulay. When he was a comparatively young man, and in

Rome, he was viewing the Coliseum, as visitors so often do, by moonlight. He was all by himself under the dark arches. All of a sudden a man in a large cloak brushed past him rather rudely, as Macaulay thought, and passed on into the darkness. Macaulay's first impulse was to put his hand to his watch-pocket, and sure enough his watch was not there. Certainly that man had stolen his watch. He rushed after him, overtook him, seized him by the collar, demanded his watch. At that time Mr. Macaulay was not thoroughly conversant with Italian—could read it some, but could not understand it when spoken. So, shaking the man as he held him by his collar, all he could do was to angrily demand "Orologio! Orologio!" The man poured forth a whole flood of Italian words in reply. Not one of them could Mr. Macaulay understand. All he did was to shake the man again, stamp with his foot, and continue to vociferate, "Orologio! Orologio!" At last the man drew forth a watch. Macaulay seized it, put it in his pocket, let

the man go, and saw nothing more of him. At length, getting back to his lodgings, his landlady met him at the door, holding out something in her hand, and saying, "Oh, sir, you left your watch on the table, so I thought it better to take care of it. Here it is." Stammered Macaulay, drawing from his pocket the watch he had so bravely seized in the Coliseum, "Good gracious! What is this, then? What is the meaning of it?" It was a watch he had never seen before. It was the sad truth. Through a simple misunderstanding of the man's motion, and through a misunderstanding springing out of his own ignorance of Italian, he himself had been the thief toward the man whom he verily thought had pilfered him. Greatly crestfallen, Mr. Macaulay hastened the next morning to the office of the Questor with the watch, and told his story. "Ah, I see," said the Questor; "you had better leave the watch with me. I will take your excuses to the owner of it; he has already been here to denounce you." This is an extreme case, I grant, but it

serves admirably to show how, in the most innocent ways possible, very terrible misunderstandings may spring up. Of course, the right thing to do is immediately through explanation and apology to attempt to set them right, as Mr. Macaulay did. But the trouble is people get angry, or proud, or are determined to put their own bad interpretation on the cause of the misunderstanding, and will not even try to come to a true understanding, but, like Robert Burns' Tam o' Shanter, will go on "nursing their wrath to keep it warm," and so can not be of the same minds, but will stay in different ones. It is not at all unlikely that through some such, in the beginning altogether innocent, misunderstanding, Euodia and Syntyche may have fallen out.

Or *the fact that Euodia and Syntyche may have moved in different social circles may have set them at variance.* Euodia may have forgotten that in Christ's Church there ought never to be such things as clannish social sets, and so she may have looked down upon Syntyche, and Syntyche may have

been unchristian enough to resent it, and so the sweet unity that ought to have bound them together as members of the same Church of Christ became shattered. Madame Recamier has been called the most beautiful woman and complete lady of her own time. The secret of her wonderfully winning power, some one has said, was the fact that for her "Disgrace and misfortune had the same sort of attraction that favor and success usually have for vulgar souls." "There was the nature of a great lady," some one else adds. That is true. There are small ladies and there are great ladies. Small ladies are fidgety and anxious and bothered about the social plane on which they stand, think of standing on that as the main object of life, treat with a kind of cold disdain those whom they think do not stand with them and have no right to. Great ladies are benignant, bestowing, bountiful and beautiful with sympathy, reaching out in kindly service. They are glad to lend helpful, lifting hands. They are thankful that they are what they are and have what they have.

no: so much that they may help themselves and look down on others, but that they may give themselves and lift up, and welcome others. Some say that the etymological meaning of the word "lady" is *loaf-giver.* So that this idea of bounteousness and helpfulness lies way back in the root-meaning of the word. Has any one a right to assume the name and not be the thing? Surely a Christian woman ought to be in the deepest of senses a great lady. Perhaps this was the trouble between Euodia and Syntyche—one of them or both of them were small ladies and not great ladies.

Or a *tyrannous conscientiousness* may have divided Euodia and Syntyche. Now, it is always right to be sternly conscientious toward oneself. It is right to be exquisitely sensitive lest any deed or indulgence of our own injure the weak consciences of our Brethren. But it is wrong to make one's own conscience the tyrannous sovereign over the consciences of other people. There is in every life a large realm of expediency and casuistry. In that realm, the Scripture

says every one is to be the judge for himself concerning what may be wrong or right for himself. At the same time, he is freely to allow others the same liberty of conscientious choice he demands for himself. This is what Paul constantly affirms—Who art thou that judgeth *another man's* servant; to his own Master he standeth or falleth.* What you are to do, keeping cleanly conscientious yourself, is not to seek to intrude your conscience upon another, but to *let* him to his own master stand or fall. Perhaps Syntyche conscientiously thought something wrong which Euodia as conscientiously did not think wrong, and therefore Syntyche would have nothing to do with Euodia, and so the unity which should have bound them in free and grand respect for each other's consciences was sadly broken in upon.

Or a bad *habit of criticism* may have shivered the concord between Euodia and Syntyche. Euodia may have heard of some criticism of Syntyche's, or Syntyche may

* Romans xiv 4.

have heard of some harsh criticism of Euodia's, and then perhaps they went so far, even though they were members of the same Philippian church, as to refuse to speak to each other. In his essay on the Earl of Chatham, Lord Macaulay speaks of a certain statesman whom Burke, with general applause, compared in a time of quiet and plenty to the evil spirit whom Ovid described, looking down on the stately temples and wealthy haven of Athens, and scarce able to refrain from weeping because she could find—*nothing at which to weep.* If the evil spirit could not criticise, she could do nothing. Perhaps Euodia or Syntyche were possessed with some such evil demon, whom her Christianity had not yet altogether exorcised. There is no quicker fracturer of unity than such a demon of bad criticism. Let me tell you a story I read once of "Uncle Tim's Talent":

> Uncle Tim held up his saw, and squinted along the teeth to see whether it was "losing its set." He failed to decide, in his surprise on finding that he was taking aim at the minister, who stepped in range just at that

moment on the street side of the fence. His eyes came into gear again as he laid his saw on the wood-pile and stepped up to the fence, saying, "Well, it's queer. It's only about a minute ago I was thinkin' of you. I was thinkin' what a good sermon that was you gave us last Sunday mornin', and how I would tell you the first time I met you." Uncle Tim was the wood-sawer and day's-work factotum for the village. Unlearned as he was, the minister always missed him if he was absent from church—he was such a helpful listener. And to Uncle Tim's compliment he replied, "You told me you thought it was at the time, in the way you listened to it; though, for that matter, you always seem interested. I don't suppose you know what a comfort such a hearer is to a minister. If all the congregation were like you, I think I could turn my poor sermons into good ones." "Thank you," said Uncle Tim. "I don't always get the right hang of everything that's said, but I should get less if I didn't pay attention. An' I always say to myself, 'The minister, he works hard to write his sermons, and if folks don't listen to 'em it's pretty discouraging.' And I says, 'You can't put much in the contribution-box, Tim, an' you can't work in prayer-meetin', but you can count one in listenin'; you can try to 'preciate what other folks do.'" "The talent for appreciating is an excellent one to have," remarked the minister. "Well, as I look at it, it isn't one to be denied to anybody," said Uncle Tim. "An' if it's the only one I've got, I'll try not to wrap it in a napkin. When Deacon

Mason does me good by one of his experience talks in prayer-meetin', I think it's no more than right he should know it. P'raps he has times of thinking that he can't say anything worth while, an' it stan's to reason that he can talk better if he knows he is doing somebody some good. And when Widder Hatch is making such a gritty fight to keep her children together an' give 'em an education, I think mebbe it makes it a little easier for her to stand up to it if a neighbor drops a word of 'preciation once in a while." The minister said nothing, but there was a look of "'preciation" on his face: and Uncle Tim continued: "The other day I see the school-ma'am was lookin' worn out and sober-like. I 'magined them big boys from the Holler was worryin' the life out of her. An' I didn't know how I could help that. But at noon I just went down to the school-house a purpose to tell her how nice our gran'son was gettin' along with his 'rithmetic. An' she said it was better than a half-dozen cups of tea, for cheering her up—she did. An' when I see Sanford's boy take a little Irish girl's part that other boys were tormentin', and they jeerin' him, I went up to him, and says, 'Uncle Tim's nothin' but a wood-sawyer, but he knows enough to see that you've got the stuff of a gentleman in you.' You see, old folks don't notice the young enough. An' there's Jim Brady, a drinkin', card-playin', shootin'-match creetur, who goes around a good deal like a dog without a owner. He knows folks despise him. But Jim's right handy with tools, and when I take my saw to

him to have it filed, and tell him he does that job better'n any man I know, I think it helps him to have a little more respect for himself, I do. You see, it's dreadful easy to look at faults in hired folks, and tavern-keepers, and faults in prayer-meetin's. But, as I look at it, we'd do a great deal better to think more about the good things in 'em."

Do you not think the talent of appreciation ever so much more Christian and worthy to be fostered than the talent for criticism? The one binds, the other breaks.

Oh, how easily and how needlessly the beautiful unity of a church may be shattered; its work hindered; the glory of that Master dimmed, Who said, By *this* shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

Will you notice now, in the fourth place, the *remedy* for such variance. I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, that they be of the same mind *in the Lord.* Self-consecrating unity with Jesus, and therefore, since our Brethren and Sisters love the same Jesus,

* John xiii. 35.

unity with each other is the certain remedy for variance. By our love to a common Lord we are in deepest and holiest pledge to be in sweet charity toward each other.

Will you notice now, in the fifth place and in the last, *a Christian Duty.* Yea, I beseech thee also, true yoke-fellow—we do not know to whom Paul refers—*help* these women which labored with me in the Gospel.

The Christian duty is one of *Help*, not toward variance, but from it toward Unity.

When there is variance, then it is neither your duty nor mine, by giving fresh feathers to the wing of rumor, by promoting misunderstandings instead of seeking to explain them, by a proud caring only for those who may move in our special set, by a harsh forcing of our conscientious scruples over on to other people, by a flaw-picking criticism, to help the Variance on and foster it; rather it is your duty and mine, by courses of conduct exactly the opposite, to *help* the joining and the healing of the Variance.

Oh! in the Home, in the Social Circle,

most of all in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us every one seek for the shining of this Beatitude upon our heads—Blessed are the *peace-makers*: for they shall be called the children of God.* Listen to the Scripture condemnation of those who do otherwise. If any man thinketh himself to be religious, *while he bridleth not his tongue*, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.† These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, *and he that soweth discora among Brethren.*‡

"Be not swift to take offence;
Let it pass!
Anger is a foe to sense:
Let it pass!
Brood not darkly o'er a wrong
Which will disappear ere long;

* Matthew v. 9.
† James i. 26, Revised Version.
‡ Proverbs vi. 16, 19.

Rather sing this cheery song—
Let it pass!
Let it pass!

"Strife corrodes the purest mind;
Let it pass!
As the unregarded wind,
Let it pass!
Any vulgar souls that live
May condemn without reprieve;
'Tis the noble who forgive.
Let it pass!
Let it pass!

"Echo not an angry word:
Let it pass!
Think how often *you* have erred;
Let it pass!
Since our joys must pass away,
Like the dewdrops on the spray,
Wherefore should our sorrows stay?
Let it pass!
Let it pass!

"If for good you've taken ill,
Let it pass!
Oh! be kind and gentle still:
Let it pass!
Time at last makes all things straight;
Let us not resent, but wait,

And our triumph shall be great ;
Let it pass !
Let it pass !

" Bid your anger to depart,
Let it pass !
Lay these homely words to heart,
' Let it pass ! '
Follow not the giddy throng :
Better to be wronged than wrong ;
Therefore sing the cheery song—
Let it pass !
Let it pass ! "

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEARNESS OF THE LORD AND WHAT SHOULD COME OF IT.

AS a kind of watchword, variously appearing in Paul's writings, occurs this expression—*The Lord is at hand.* It is a sort of proverb. It is a gathering up and condensation of Paul's whole system of Theology, of the entire body of his religious teaching. It is, as well, a maxim for the daily life.

Thus it does not stand alone. It is a seed planted and pushing up to bloom. It is in connection with much, and much should come of it. Because the Lord is at hand many things should follow. Read the Scripture, with which, in this Epistle to the Philippians, this watchword, this high maxim for the Christian life, is set in relation :

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. *The Lord is at hand.* Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

So, then, this Fact that the Lord is at hand has to do with a Christian Rejoicing, and a Christian Self-control, and a Christian Freedom from Anxiety, and a Christian Peace. These are the beautiful and fragrant bloomings which should issue from it.

This, then, is our thought for the present chapter—*The nearness of the Lord and what should come of it.*

First, then, the Fact—*the nearness of the Lord;* the Lord is at hand.

In answer to those who so constantly interpret this expression as having sole reference to the imminence of the Lord's second advent, it is enough to quote here the words of Dr. Hackett, than whom there is no

* Philippians iv. 4, 5, 6, 7.

higher exegetical authority. This expression "may mean that the Lord is ever near to His people as their efficient supporter and helper, so that, with such an arm to defend them, they have nothing to fear from the power and malice of their enemies; or, more probably, that He is always near to them in point of time, will soon come to relieve them of their cares and trials, and receive them to their appointed rewards and rest in Heaven. There is no necessary, certainly no exclusive, reference here to a definite expectation of the near advent of Christ, and the end of the world."*

It is in these senses of nearness—the nearness of constant presence, the nearness of support—that, it seems to me, we ought mainly to understand this common Apostolic maxim and watchword for the Christian life, the Lord is at hand.

The nearness of the Lord. That is a very noble sonnet of William Wordsworth's on the "World's Ravages":

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* In Lange's Commentary, *in loco.*

"The world is too much with us: late and soon
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The Winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers:
For this, for everything, we are out of tune:
It moves us not—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea:
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn."

The poet means, I am sure, that any thought and sense of the Supernatural is better than no thought or sense at all. He would rather believe in a kind of divine Proteus, tending his flocks of seals, and able to foretell the future, or in a kind of divine Triton making music out of his conch-shells; he would rather believe, even in a poor, dim, heathen way, in some sort of a Divine presence and a Divine care, than believe that this world and this awful and tremulous human life were just a pitiable getting and spending

machine and routine, with nothing whatever divine about them.

And I am sure the poet sang the truth. The dimmest and most mistaken thought of the Divine Presence is better than a blank and hopeless denial of any Divine Presence. The first mistake is a million times better than the last dreadful and atheistic mistake.

And it is not to be denied that toward just this last dreadful and atheistic mistake much of the thinking of our day, which arrogantly styles itself advanced and scientific, is tending. Take these words as symptoms: "Science has shown us that we are under the dominion of general laws, and that there is no special providence. Nature acts with fearful uniformity; stern as fate, absolute as tyranny, merciless as death, too vast to praise, too inexplicable to worship, too inexorable to propitiate; it has no ear for prayer, no heart for sympathy, no arm to save."

Toward such a view of the Divine *distance*, it must be confessed, too much of the

world's thought is setting. It sees law and refuses to see God. It forgets, or will not learn that, as another says, "a law of nature is not an entity, neither is it a power; it can do nothing whatever. It is simply the mode of action of a force that lies behind it." Truer a modern poet's thought, addressing Deity:

> "The laws of Nature are but Thine.
> For Nature! who is she?
> A name—the name that men assign
> To Thy sole alchemy."

But a *real* and *reverent* science, instead of making God distant, brings Him near. For instance, think of this. Here is oxygen. It is a perfectly colorless, transparent gas. Now, most gases you can reduce from the gaseous form into the liquid form by simple mechanical pressure. That is to say, you can squeeze the gas into the liquid or into the solid, if only you squeeze hard enough. But oxygen gas it is almost impossible to force and freeze into a liquid. A German chemist, Natterer* by name, subjected this

* "Religion and Chemistry," by J. P. Cooke, Prof. in Harvard University, revised edition, p. 72.

oxygen gas to a pressure of over forty-five thousand pounds, or twenty tons, to the square inch, but not even that enormous weight could change it from a gas to a liquid. But now, remember that between one-half and one-third of the rocks and soil which form the crust of this globe on which you stand is composed of oxygen, and that in these rocks and soils this gas *is* reduced to and held in a solid form; remember, also, that from one-half to one-third of the bodies in which you dwell is composed of this same oxygen, and that in your blood it *is* compressed to fluid form, and in other portions of your bodies to solid form; remember, also, that eight-ninths of all the water in the world is also composed of this same oxygen gas, and that in water oxygen *is* reduced to and held in the fluid form; and then, again, remember that twenty tons of pressure on a single square inch of oxygen gas are not enough to squeeze the poor square inch of gas from the form gaseous into the form fluid; and then begin to gain a little faint and dim conception of the enormous force which

must be holding this same oxygen quietly imprisoned in all the rocks and in all the soils and in all the trees and in all the human bodies and in all the whelming rivers and lakes and oceans in the world. Now, science has a name for this awful and steady and pervasive force. Its name for this huge force is chemical affinity. But when you have said chemical affinity, you have only suggested another question, namely, What is chemical affinity? There an irreverent and godless science stops. Upon the brink of that question it is abashed and dumb. It can only mutter over and over its old vague answer, covering its ignorance with cloudy words, chemical affinity, chemical affinity. But a reverent and God-honoring science—the science of a Kepler or of a Newton or of a Faraday—will answer you, while it kneels in the presence of the Unseen Holy, chemical affinity is the WILL OF GOD, with its easy power imprisoning and constraining oxygen. And the better science to that end is tending steadily. It is recognizing behind gravity, and behind

magnetism, and behind chemical affinity and behind all the other tremendous forces which play about us, the Will of God in which all things have their being. So, then, a true science does not make God distant. It brings Him near. It is the present energy of His present will which poises the earth, and causes the most ancient heavens to continue strong. The laws of Nature are but the steady modes of the action of the Divine Will. A right science shows us that the Lord is not distant, but at hand.

Besides, *the meaning of the Incarnation* is that the Lord is near. I have read that the inscription which ancient Egypt engraved on the pediment of one of its most famous temples, to describe the Deity, was: "I am that which has been, and which is, and which is to be, and my veil no mortal hath yet drawn aside." "Who is He, then," as another asks, in the presence of this inscription, "who is, then, this almighty and invisible Being, of whose glory the heavens speak, Who fills all space with His presence, Who makes the universe His Temple, from

Whom all things proceed, to Whom they all return? He asserts His existence, He awes us: but His face is mystery, and no mortal has yet been able to draw aside His veil."*

Present He is in power. Near to us He is in the terrific and even uniformity of those modes of action of His will which we call the laws of Nature. But is He near in any other way? Has He heart? Does He pity? Does He love? Does He care? And the Incarnation drew aside the veil to tell us yes to all such questions. God came forth from behind the curtains of an infinite mystery; He parted the hiding draperies of invariable law; He stood forth from an existence so vast and spiritual as to be beyond our poor conception; and in the Babe at Bethlehem, and in the life of suffering Brotherhood of which that birth at Bethlehem was the gate, He laid open to us His Heart, He revealed to us the immeasurable abyss of His self-sacrificing love. And this is a main purpose of the Incarnation to assure

* "The Son of Man," by Frank Conlin, D.D., pp. 1. 2.

us that in self-burdening love, and in care unspeakable, the Lord is near.

Nor is this all. Following the dispensation of the Incarnation comes the *dispensation of the Holy Spirit*, whose peculiar office-work it is to assure us that the Lord is in constant and closest nearness. That Christ was born and suffered and died and rose again had been but history, something that belonged to the past ages, a finished fact like the battle of Marathon or that of Actium, were it not for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But that ministry transmutes all this from a finished fact into a present force, from a history into an energy. "It is not enough," as another says, "that we have the historical Christ. If our Lord carried back with Him all that He brought, and left behind Him only the memorials of His presence, then His coming was a failure. Without a living and present Christ Christianity is a thing of the past, it is dead." But now the Holy Spirit is a living and present Christ, illuminating the Scripture, persuading men, *dwelling in men* And so, not in the more

general sense of the Divine omnipresence, but in the specific sense of a personal, affectionate, guiding, guarding, illumining, interpenetrating, and indwelling special presence the Lord, in the person of the Holy Spirit, is at hand.

Here, then, are some proofs and snatches of the Fact of the Lord's nearness. The Lord is at hand. A true science tells us so. The Incarnation means it. The ministry of the Holy Spirit enforces it. Remember those words of De Quincey: "All men come into this world *alone*; all leave it *alone*. Even a little child has a dread-whispering consciousness that if he should be summoned to travel into God's presence no gentle nurse will be allowed to lead him by the hand, nor mother to carry him in her arms, nor little sister to share his trepidations. King and priest, warrior and maiden, philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone." True at once and false these solemn words. True in giving utterance to the fact that in our deepest selves we are alone, and must go on in life and into death

alone. Untrue, these words, in speaking of God's presence as of something we must at last get into. No, the Lord is at hand. We are beset by the Lord's presence now. The lonely self is evermore attended by this Divine companion. Closer than the wrap of the mother's arms around her babe, more intimate than the mingling of mated souls in marriage, from tottering steps of infancy to tottering steps of age and through all the life between, and onward also through the dread and unknown change which we call death, we are held in the loving, caring, thoughtful clasp of the Divine Presence, we are embraced by the Divine Nearness. The Lord is at hand.

Well, then, since this is true, since this should be a consciousness so constant that the Apostle enshrined it as a maxim and watchword for the daily life, what should come of it, what should be its fruitage?

This, *first*—since the Lord is near, *Rejoice.* Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, Rejoice. Strange words these from a

buffeted, harassed, imprisoned man. Strange words these from a man who could not lift his hand but that he must hear the harsh clank of the iron chain which bound him to his Roman keeper. Strange words these from a man panting with unused energy, longing for action as a war-horse scents the battle, yet reined in as the precious years sped on. Strange words, Rejoice, and again I will say, Rejoice. And yet not so strange when you remember that his injunction is, Rejoice not in external things, but in internal; not in circumstances, but in the Lord. For from that Lord's nearness nothing could divide him; not edicts of Emperors, not Roman guards, not clanking coupling-chains. All the time his Lord was at hand. Even as Mrs. Browning sings:

"All are not taken; there are left behind
Living Beloveds; tender looks to bring,
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so—if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring,

Where Dust to Dust the love from life disjoined,
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving,
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moor in weary dearth),
Crying, Where are ye, O my loved and loving?
I know a voice would sound, Daughter, I AM!
Can I suffice for Heaven, and not for earth?"

The Sufficing One remains!

"Ruined," he said, as, fleeing from the wrecks of a vast financial panic, he sought his home, to fling himself amidst it, wailing out, "ruined, ruined." "Not ruined," she said, his wife, with her firmer faith and clearer vision. "Not ruined; you have honor, you have your wife, you have your children—and you have God. Amid the wrecks and the disaster He is near." And the broken man bethought himself, roused by the music of her faithful speech. "Yes, all is not gone, I am not all ruined. God is near even amid this crash of fortune. In Him I can and will rejoice." And in the strength of the near God the disaster was at last repaired.

This is what I have been saying, that

amid all circumstances the Lord is not distant, He is near; that neither prisons nor wrecks nor death can ever shake His nearness; and that in the certainty and the consciousness of that personal, loving, guarding, caring nearness, the deeper wells of the inner joy no outward thing can drain.

It stands there, and against it drift the desert sands, and down upon it beats the desert sun; and yet if, with Wordsworth, we can say,

> "And 'tis my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes,"

how it rejoices in coronal of swaying leaf, and in benignant cluster of refreshing fruit. And the reason is, the palm has struck the deeper springs which underrun the desert.

And for us, too, there is evermore the deeper unfailing spring of the Lord's nearness. And the soul touched consciously by that, like Paul may say, even amid its prisons, Rejoice in the Lord, and again I will say, Rejoice.

And the Christian life is just the life

which is sensitive to this Divine nearness. And so it ought to be a life strong in rejoicing, because its roots do reach beneath and away from the sands and sun.

Petulant, complaining, moody, morbid, frowning, dark-browed, criticising, hard, unlovely—how we disown and disgrace our Lord when we are thus in any wise. The Lord is at hand, and from that nearness no outward circumstance need rob us if we will have it so. The Lord is at hand, and out of this wondrous consciousness let there push up and out the bloom of Joy.

Second. From the nearness of the Lord there should result a *noble self-control.* Let your moderation—your holding back upon yourself, your forbearance, your gentleness—be known unto all men—the Lord is at hand. Let it *be known.* Don't say anything about it, don't boast about it, let it announce itself as the wafted fragrance of the flower tells of its neighborhood. Remember you are in your Lord's presence, and, carrying yourself as in His sight, let the self-controlling gentleness in which the constant

thought of Him must hold you make its own report unto all men. "Wilt thou be faithful if I buy thee?" asked a purchaser of a slave. "Yes," said the slave; "whether you buy me or not." Noble answer. Faithful any way. Conscious of the nearness of his Lord, and so holding himself in strong yet gentle self-control.

All graciousness and sweetness in *society* are how many Christians, but appearing, as Rowland Hill puts it, to be engrafted upon crab-trees in their *own houses*. There is no worse home-sin than a blurting, blustering, blistering, flaming temper. But because it is a *home*-sin, that man who knows he will lose the bargain if he is not calm and cool in business, and for the sake of the business controls himself; that woman who prizes the reputation of a sweet ladyhood, and for the sake of society controls herself—*at home*, where the bargain is not made, and where society does not enter, and where the self is in undress, flings loose rein upon the neck of temper. Ah! do they forget that the Lord is as near the home as the store or

parlor? As in those cases they can let their moderation be known, and for such sake, can they not, and ought they not to let it be known here for His sake? Nay, ought not this consciousness of their Lord's nearness to overshadow all places and all times, and compel them into a Christly gentleness in store, in social circle, in church, in home, in kitchen even—everywhere?

And just this sweet and solemn pressure of our Lord's nearness we need, O Friends, to hold us in gracious self-control amid the stinging harassments and abrading frictions of the minuter bothers of our lives. Some greater thing we plan and attempt for our Lord's sake, and are steady and patient and hopeful and persevering in it, because of the sweet consciousness that in it we are serving Him, and that all the time He broods above us with His close blessing. But there is many a Christian who could stand martyrdom at the stake, for whom a charred beef-steak, or a burnt biscuit, or a bad cup of coffee, or a good-natured, blundering servant or employé would be too

much altogether. But our Lord is as much at hand, and we are as much before Him, amid a swarm of New Jersey mosquitoes as when we preach our sermons, or teach our Sabbath-school classes, or worship in His sanctuary, or plan and work for missions, or endow a college. And what we need among the minuter annoyances of life which so often and so sadly unbind our self-control, as a little flickering match unhoops a barrel of gunpowder, is just this thought and consciousness that He is all the time at hand and that He holds us constantly in His eye. Gentleness—not passion, not complaint, not petulance—is the flower which should flourish in this Sacred Nearness.

Third. Because of the Lord's nearness there should result a *blessed Freedom from Anxiety.* The Lord is at hand, therefore be careful—anxious—for nothing. Is not this a right and Christian hymn to sing?

> "I know not what shall befall me,
> God hangs a mist o'er my eyes,
> And so, each step of my onward path,
> He makes new scenes to rise,

And every joy He sends me comes
As a sweet and glad surprise.

" I see not a step before me,
As I tread on another year;
But the past is still in God's keeping,
The future His mercy shall clear,
And what looks dark in the distance,
May brighten as I draw near.

" For perhaps the dreaded future
Has less bitter than I think;
The Lord may sweeten the waters
Before I stoop to drink,
Or, if Marah must be Marah,
He will stand beside its brink.

" It may be He keeps waiting
Till the coming of my feet
Some gift of such rare blessedness,
Some joy so strangely sweet,
That my lips shall only tremble
With the thanks they can not speak.

" So I go on—not knowing;
I would not if I might;
I would rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I would rather walk with Him by faith
Than walk alone by sight.

"My heart shrinks back from trials
Which the future may disclose,
Yet I never had a sorrow
But what the dear Lord chose;
So I send the coming tears back
With the whispered word, '*He knows.*'"*

And since His nearness is to run through all the future, and since no future can possibly slip beyond His knowledge, why should I not enter into a glad and unburdened freedom, and in nothing be anxious?

Yes, why should I not? you and I ask often of our faithless hearts; why should I let myself be cut to pieces and frayed into such tangling shreds of miserable anxiety?

But to be anxious for nothing—ah! there's the rub. I would not be so anxious and yet I am, even though, like cool winds in sultry noons, comes often the feeling of the Lord's nearness.

But will you notice that the Apostle gives us the steps by which we may reach this great, glad, divine, free carelessness. See this direction. In nothing be anxious.

* Mary G. Brainard.

How? Why, remembering that the Lord is near, in *everything*, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. In nothing anxious, *because* thus to the near Lord with everything!

By prayer. Since your Lord is thus at hand, it can not be unreasonable or illogical to pray. Tell Him, then, your daily wants. Go into your closet, and shut the door, and roll your burdens over on to Him. Do not think you can be an unanxious Christian if you refuse to be a praying one. Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.*

By supplication. Sometimes you are in special straits; sometimes there is a peculiar and crushing burden; sometimes a more awful fear, almost or quite a fact, points at you with bony finger, and frightens all your rest away. Well, then, meet special trouble with special *supplication.* This word supplication means precisely this, a specializing

* Ezekiel xxxvi. 37

prayer which grapples with a distinct, separated, peculiar trouble, and beseeches the help of the near Lord in that particular emergency and on that individual detail. Do not imagine that the near Lord is not enough for this great distinct trouble. Seize it by special prayer, and specially force it into His Presence and on to His shoulder.

With thanksgiving. Bad as the advice of Eliphaz generally was to Job, it was right in this—He shall deliver in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.* Think back gratefully over many a divine deliverance. Tell the near Lord your thanks. And as memory brings up the mercies of the past, you shall be filled with faith in the near Lord for the present and the future. The fruit of Thanksgiving is calm courage.

And thus as you, concerning everything, by prayer and supplication make known your requests to this Lord who is at hand, you shall begin to find the flourishing of

* Job v. 19.

this glorious bloom of "a heart at leisure from itself," of a high and holy freedom from anxiety, because you are getting into the habit of letting this near Lord care. And since *He cares*, what need of carking care for you?

And now, must not *Peace* come? Because the Lord is at hand—and therefore rejoicing in Him, and therefore a steady and conscientious self-control before Him, and therefore a freedom from anxiety bred of confiding prayer into that Ear within your whisper-reach, within your thought-reach, out of this can you get anything but a guarding Peace?

One night in the distant West I slept in camp when there was some danger from hostile Indians. I do not think there was any critical danger. But there were rumors of hostile Indians all about, and there was danger enough to make me anxious. And as I lay there in my tent, I thought, yonder on that hill there is a soldier-sentinel, awake, alert; and on that other hill there is another; and still on that other hill there is

another. And so, as I thought of them, those sentinels came to stand to me for a guarding peace, and so I was soon quiet and asleep.

And that is precisely the figure of this most wonderful Scripture. Because of the near Lord, and through such appropriation and use of Him as He longs to have you make, the Peace of God which passeth all understanding shall *stand sentinel* round your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Ah, if we would but remember more this Great Fact of our Lord's nearness, and determine to hold ourselves more steadily in the presence of its high inspirations, amid what fragrant and radiant blooms of Rejoicing, and of benignant Self-Control, and of grand Deliverance from a torturing Anxiety, and of a guarding Peace, might we not continually walk.

CHAPTER XVII.

THINKING AND DOING.

I HAVE read somewhere a very amusing, though, of course, exaggerated, story, which Charles Lamb tells of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

One morning, as Mr. Lamb was going to London by the Enfield stage, Mr. Coleridge seized him by the button, and began to discourse. Having had much experience in it, Mr. Lamb was sure the talking would be endless. So he swiftly and quietly cut off the button by which Mr. Coleridge held him, and, mounting the stage, sped away to London. When he came back from London in the afternoon—there was Mr. Coleridge, in precisely the same attitude, discoursing on, holding the button with one hand and sawing the air with the other.

The story is an exaggeration certainly, and yet it is an exaggeration of the truth. Possessed by his own thought, Mr. Coleridge had little care concerning the relation of that thought to others. Toward its practical issue and result he gave no heed. His speech was but audible musing. He was so absorbed in this, that whether he told it to Mr. Lamb or to the vacant air, it mattered not.

And so Samuel Taylor Coleridge stands in literature as the dreamer; as the man of vast and vague intention, but of comparatively small outcome. He is the absorbed, idealizing, meditative thinker — great in often cloudy speculation, slight in concentrated practical action.

For an illustration of the tendency exactly opposite, let us go to the Scripture.

David was at Mahanaim in exile. During the few days of respite, his followers, under the command of Joab, had been organized. Absalom, the rebel, and in the thought of many the coming man, marches, sweeping

onward victoriously, from Jerusalem. Joab, with the loyal army, goes forth to meet him. At some distance from Mahanaim the battle clashes. Its result, you will remember, is the utter defeat and death of Absalom. More anxious than for victory, you will remember, also, was David for the safety of his bad though well-beloved son. Now came the duty of bearing tidings to the distant and waiting king.

One Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, was very anxious to be the courier. So he says to Joab, "Let *me* now run and bear the king tidings how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies." But for some reason Ahimaaz has not become conversant with the whole circumstances. He only knows, in a general way, that there has been a battle and a defeat of the enemy, but of the particular occurrences, and especially of the details of the death of Absalom, he knows nothing. And so Joab answers, "Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day." And then, turning to Cushi, who has the whole transaction definitely in

nis mind, Joab says, "Go, tell the king what thou hast seen." And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab and ran.

But Ahimaaz is not satisfied. He is bursting with activity. He knows he has not very much to tell, but he is bound to run, and with him the *running* is the main thing. So he comes pesteringly to Joab again, and pleads, "But, howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi." And Joab answers, "*Wherefore* wilt *thou* run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?" But Ahimaaz is determined to run any way —that is the chief thing with him, just the doing, just the running. And so he comes up to the charge again. "But, howsoever, let me run." I do not imagine that Joab was a man of very wonderful patience. He would not allow himself to be bothered with much pestering. And so, half angry, and to relieve himself of what was getting to be a nuisance, Joab simply answers, "Run."

Well, there was this much to be said for Ahimaaz, he was a good runner, even though he had nothing very special to run for, and,

having chosen a shorter way, he soon quite overran Cushi.

Meantime, the king was sitting in the tower over the gate, and the watchman, climbing to its highest point, saw a man running alone. And the watchman cried and told the king. And the king said, "If he be alone there is tidings in his mouth." Then, a little after, another runner is descried. And the watchman said, "Methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok." The watchman is right. It is he. As he gets into the neighborhood of the king he calls out, "All is well," and then, coming nearer, he falls down to the earth upon his face before the king, and says, "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king."

But the king is hungry for a more special message. This Ahimaaz knew well enough, for Joab had told him so before he started. And so the king replies anxiously, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" But precisely

that critical question Ahimaaz can not answer. He knew he could not when he would turn his face toward Mahanaim. But still he was set, not so much on telling what needed to be known, not so much on running to a purpose, as on *running*. Thus all he can say to the tremulous king is, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and me, thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was." And then the king said unto him, "Turn aside and stand here." And he turned aside and stood still. And that was all that came of his clattering doing and tremendous running. He simply ran—and that was the whole of it, and so he ran for nothing. It was not until Cushi, the man who had a real message, and so the man whose running amounted to something, came up, that the waiting king could learn the facts his heart was hungriest to know.*

Now, this man Ahimaaz represents another very common and opposite tendency in our human nature — the tendency toward the *doing* simply, toward an external

* 2 Samuel, chapter xviii.

bustling, hurrying, scattering, inconsequential, empty activity. And of such sort, because there is no substantial thought behind it, no distinct, meditated, thorough errand on to which the action pushes.

Shading off variously toward the one extreme illustrated by Mr. Coleridge, or toward the other illustrated by Ahimaaz, there are Christians.

There are Christian *dreamers*, who, in various ways, think much, but do little.

There are Christians who think much *doctrinally*. A precise and cut-and-dried orthodoxy is the eminent thing with them. They will allow no chance for freedom of opinion. They will give no leeway to differences of temperament, or to degrees of development, or to variousness of education. They set a mark which everybody must toe or be esteemed a reprobate. Usually it is some one special point upon which they fix their exclusive thought, like the doctrine of election, or the return of the Jews, or precisely their notion of the temperance question. The whole of Christianity for them is

crystallized into and symbolized by this one thing. When you beseech them for Christian action, in a personal evangelizing toward their neighbors, in the teaching of a Sabbath-school class, in the practice of a high and loving Christian life—they turn aside from such things as from most small and trivial matters. Is he sound?—meaning, of course, sound according to their notion of soundness—is their one question and single criterion.

There are Christians who think much *experimentally*. They dream about a present and personal sinlessness. They profess a perfection which nobody can discover in them but they themselves. They are all the time seeking to abide upon the mountain, where, with Peter, they can say—Lord, it is good for us to be here; here let us build our booths and stay. But when you ask them to go down with their Lord to the tortured demoniac at the mountain's foot, to do what they can to ease the pain and lift the burdens of sorrow from the shoulders of the sad world—for that they have slight relish.

There are Christians who think much *sentimentally.* A church service is to them a kind of Lotus-land. They enjoy vastly the rest and seclusion of religious worship. They dote on sermons. They open their souls, as flowers do their petals to the summer breezes, that they may be swept by exquisite and exact church music; a false note, a little tangle of discord, is the worst possible sin to them. Their sensibilities are exquisitely delicate. They flourish in dim religious lights and long-drawn aisles. A communion cloth of the true ecclesiastical color and rightly embroidered will put them into ecstasies. But when you suggest to them a little real action—for example, the bringing others into the sanctuary, the attempt to win others to the preaching of the word, the definite service of the visitation of the sick, or of a Sabbath-school class, then they sigh and faint, and declare they have no influence, and, like the nautilus when you touch him, withdraw into the beauty and iridescence of their own shells.

Dreamers these and such as these, dwell-

ing only in the realm of the inward thought and careless that their thinking comes to nothing. They are like Mr. Coleridge holding on to Charles Lamb's button and talking on and sawing the air, as willing to talk to vacancy as to a man.

Then, on the other hand, there are *Ahimaaz* Christians, who care nothing for the message, but only for the running. They are in the stir of a perpetual activity. They are as difficult to put your hand on as on a ground squirrel dashing along a fence-rail. They are breathless with exertion. Let the little bird in the air carry to them news of a new-fangled temperance or revival meeting within fifty miles, and quicker than a telegram they are there. There is not a committee within the circle of a hundred miles of which they are not members. Tell them of something to be done in their own church —they have no time, they are so pressed and busy with engagements. Tell them that they are not growing, that they are rising into no stronger, richer grasp of Christian truth, that a meditative solitude

now and then, a little poring over the pages of the Scripture would be good for them, a little closer care of the message, and—you have affronted them, or they excuse themselves because they are running so. These are Ahimaaz Christians.

How different the Apostolic ideal for a real Christian :

> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think* on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, *do* : and the God of peace shall be with you.*

Think on these things ; as the New Version has it, These things *do*. In the Apostle's thought, these two, the *Thinking* and the *Doing*, must be married and forevermore refused divorce.

So, then, there are for us these lessons for the Christian life.

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* Philippians iv. 8, 9.

First. *The Christian must be one who thinks.* Think on these things. And this word "think" is a very strenuous one. It means to think upon, to consider, to hold speech concerning in one's own mind. Perhaps as good a word to tell its meaning as we can find is meditation. A Christian must be one who, in quiet, and with himself, and withdrawn from and undisturbed by external and clattering activity, waits in meditation. While I was *musing* the fire burned,* says the Psalmist. And then, again, he says, I *thought* on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.† And if there were more of such musing and thinking, there would not be such piles of dead, cold cinders on the hearths of Christian hearts, nor so many laggard and straggling steps in the way of the Divine testimonies.

But of what must the Christian think? Let us run through, for a moment, the great and precious catalogue of the subjects for Christian thought which the Apostle, hereabouts, suggests.

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* Psalm xxxix. 3.

† Psalm cxix. 59.

Whatsoever things are true. True, that is, in the widest sense — the great, staple, changeless truths of the Divine Revelation, also the truth of a thorough and shining sincerity in thought and speech and deed. The real things in doctrine and in duty, on these let your thoughts fasten. I knew a man once, who, instead of keeping his thoughts upon the true, kept them on the human and, as they are sometimes called, scholarly objections to the true. Instead of listening to hear what Christ said, he kept ear attent to hear what some German rationalist like Strauss, or some French romancer like Renan, had to say against Christ. And the result was, he very soon made shipwreck of his faith; not because there was not sufficient in the truth to answer all objections, but because he would not give himself chance to hear what the truth had to tell him. This is a very common temptation for young men in these doubting and criticising days of ours—in their thinking and their reading they turn main attention to the human assaults upon

the true. But the Apostle says, No, whatsoever things are true, think on *these.* The best way to detect iron pyrites is to study gold, then iron pyrites can not cheat you. Keep your thought, then, steadily on the golden true.

Whatsoever things are honest; honorable, as the New Version has it, seemly, such things as are in accord with the high and holy character of a Christian man. Do not think on the dishonorable and unseemly things in which some who, though they profess and call themselves Christians, may allow themselves, that you may potter about your conscience with the devil's argument—they, carrying the Christian name, do such things, therefore I may do them. Nay, keep your thought so fixed on the consistent, the seemly, the honorable, that, entranced with their beauty, you shall disdain with a most noble scorn different and staining things.

Whatsoever things are just; righteous, that is, in the highest and most emphatic senses. Such things in business as have no twist

and taint; such things in social intercourse as, like the sunlight clearing away the mists, can not endure and will not suffer the clouding innuendo or the malarious scandal.

Whatsoever things are pure; stainlessly chaste. The vile suggestion, the putrescent double meaning, the loose talk into which men sometimes fall when they are not restrained by the sanctities of a woman's presence—from such things, quick as you would turn your steps from the rattle and hiss and ready fangs of a rattlesnake, turn your thoughts to things most chastely white.

Whatsoever things are lovely; lovable, that is, winning and attractive. You have no right as a Christian to be hard, jagged, unbeautiful. He was right who said Jesus Christ was the truest of gentlemen. You have no right to be *bizarre* in dress, either as toward a hideous plainness or a miserable slovenliness on the one hand, or as toward a gaudy and untasteful glare and glitter on the other. You have no right to be harsh in temper, glum, and sticking with quills of prejudice or of sudden passion, like

a porcupine when he is angry. You have no right to be in manner cold, reserved, distant, as though no one else were worthy touching you. You are to be lovable, gracious, so that your presence is benediction. That you may be, think on whatsoever things are lovely.

Whatsoever things are of good report; that is, the well-spoken-of, the well-reputed. It is wrong for you to say you are so independent that you do not care a straw what people think of you or say of you. You ought to care. For the sake of Christ you ought to care. He said, though He was under no obligation to pay tribute *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them,* go thou to the sea and cast an hook and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of money; that take and give unto them for me and thee.* And who are you, that you should say, in the presence of the constant courtesy of the Master that you will not care what others think or say? Nay

* Matthew xvii. 27.

care. Be courteous. That you may be study the well-reputed things.

If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, that is, anything deserving praise. What things soever anywhere are virtuous and praiseful, even the old heathen notion of a grand manfulness, for example, *think* on these things.

A Christian is one who, concerning doctrine, concerning the noblest carriage of himself, concerning his relations to others, is to be always occupied with the highest, holiest, most gracious, most winning thinkings.

The Christian must be one who thinks.

Second. *The Christian must be also one who does.* Such things as these which I have taught you and which also I have striven to set forth by example in your presence—*do*, says the Apostle.

The Christian may not be one who dwells in the realm of thought exclusively or in the realm of action exclusively; he must be one who dwells in both realms. He must think that he may do. If the seed of his high

thinking do not push up and out and bring forth the fruit of action after its kind, it is of little worth. Said Savonarola, "One only knows that which he practices." They asked Joan of Arc what virtue she supposed dwelt in her white standard, wishing to accuse her of magic. "I said to it," she answered, "go boldly among the English, and then *I followed it myself*." So, lifting the standard of white thoughts, must the Christian himself follow them into white action. Thinking *and* doing—not thinking alone, nor doing alone, but both together—must go to make the genuine Christian life.

Consider Jesus, how perfectly He united in Himself the necessary meditative side and the necessary practical side of the true life. Rising a great while before day, when work so thronged upon Him He could get no other time, He sought the mountain solitude for communion with the Father; then through the day, "unhasting and unresting," He went about *doing* good.

Think on these things, these things *do* So only can we

" Make our branches lift a golden fruit
Into the bloom of Heaven."

Think the good,
And not the clever;
Thoughts are seeds
That grow: forever
Bearing richest fruit in life.
Such alone can make
The thinker
Strong to conquer in the strife.

'*Do* the good,
And not the clever;
Fill thy life
With true endeavor;
Strive to be the noblest man
Not what others do,
But rather
Do the very best you can."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STRENGTHENING CHRIST.

TO these Philippians the Apostle makes a very remarkable statement concerning the peculiar ability of our Religion to *impart Power.*

> I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

And this is a distinctive glory of our faith. Not only does it tell men what to do, it gives them strength to do the thing it tells. Christianity is both precept and an internal victorious force. Through acceptance of it, not only is man's sin forgiven, but also his moral weakness is thrust aside by vigor. In place of the cry of helplessness—O wretched man that I am, who shall

* Philippians iv. 13.

deliver me from the body of this death?—there is in Christianity for that same broken man the triumph born of the sense of an inbreathed and interpenetrating Divine power—I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

No one was more sensitive to personal service and favor than was the Apostle. Toward him no one could turn in the slightest way of loving deed, that he was not met instantly with the kindliest courtesy of recognition and of thankfulness. As the buds upon the leaf-branch burst at the touch of the spring air, so he broke forth in perpetual and particular expression at any breath of a helping love.

If any of you are apt to be somewhat glum, and unresponsive in sweet and ready thanks for what is done for you by others; if any of you, amid the strain and hurry of life, are growing careless of a tender and mindful courtesy; if any of you are falling into the bad habit of taking what is done for you at home as matters of course, because you are

* Romans vii. 24, 25.

the head of the house, and, as its chief magnate, ought certainly to be waited on; if you are expecting such personal services as your mere right, and receiving them as a granite boulder does the sunshine, making no reply of soft grass or fragrant flower, I do not know better reading for you, to show you how wrong and rude you are, than the last chapters of Paul's epistles. Mark there his mindful mention of this one and that other and that other, of Euodia, and Syntyche, and Clement, of Epænetus well beloved, of Mary who bestowed much labor on us, of Amplias my beloved in the Lord, of Urbane our helper in Christ, of Apelles approved in Christ; mark there how instant and particular is the Apostle's recognition of the slightest service, and learn, if you are in any wise the man or woman I have hinted at, that the highest kind of Christianity is the readiest and the tenderest courtesy. I have known of parents who thought it beneath their parental dignity to thank or praise their children — poor parents and to-be-pitied children. That is a meagre religion

which does not bloom into gracious courtesy.

So here, in the closing words of this Epistle to the Philippians, Paul goes on to tell his thanks for their kind memory and care of him. You will remember that the Philippians had been mindful that now, since imprisonment had tied the hands of the tent-maker, he could not win in Rome his daily bread, and for his necessity had lovingly sent contribution to him by Epaphroditus. So Paul replies, But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath budded out again, and I knew that before this you would have done it, but you could not, you did not have opportunity. And yet I would not have you understand that my thanks to you spring out of the mere filling of my temporal want; I would not have you suppose that I can not endure want. Rather understand that there is a noble power of independency furnished by Christ's Gospel. I have learned a wonderful lesson. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith

to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. In everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I am independent of external circumstances. I have internal resource. I am dowered with internal strength. And then the Apostle rises to the grand and wonderful statement of the power-imparting ability of a Christian faith. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**

Nor was this an empty boast of Paul's—easy and great upon the lip, but breaking at the touch of trial in the life. The life shows it to have been a statement of the solidest sincerity and reality.

Notice a few particulars.

How hard it is to courageously and hopefully and unweariedly strike at *an apparently impossible duty*. What a girding of energy a man needs to go at it and keep at it. In such a land as ours, where the very air is Christian, and where the sweet clangor of

* Philippians iv. 10, 13.

the church-bells flings out music every Sunday, it is quite impossible for us to make actual to ourselves the enormous and, to human sight, hopeless difficulty which confronted Paul as he went forth to attempt to win the men of Athens and Corinth and Ephesus and Philippi and Rome to Christ. A celebrated writer has so well and concisely stated the difficulties, that I will let him tell them: (1) "The first teachers of Christianity were treading a path never trodden by any one before, and their work involved the uprooting of the habits of sin and idolatry, and the dissipation of ideas acquired in childhood. (2) There was the moral corruption of the large cities; the Greeks had no taste for moral improvement; the death of Socrates had brought no blessing to Athens. (3) The hero of the Greeks was the man who entertained them with sophistry, and this was exactly contrary to this Gospel; Christ crucified, to them was folly. (4) The difficulty of overcoming the prejudices and opposition of the Jews was enormous; they could only become

Christians in company with the Heathen, and with the certainty of their relatives becoming their enemies; and besides this, they were banded together by the associations of trade, and in them the spirit of persecution was innate and hereditary." Yet, confronted by such difficulties, how high was the courage, and unwavering the hope, and unflagging the persistence of the Apostle. Napoleon said there shall be no Alps, and set his armies to make a road. But Paul had no armies. He was only the despised preacher of a despised faith. Yet he set himself, not at making a road over the Alps, but at leveling the Alps. And he set himself at it, and he succeeded, not because he was sure of competence in himself, but simply and solely because he was sure of a competence imparted by Jesus Christ his Lord.

Notice again. Milton sings—

> "They also serve
> Who only stand *and wait.*"

And what he sings is true. But he does not go on to tell us, what you and I know well

enough, that this service of waiting is often the hardest possible; that for a strong energy it is immensely easier to spend itself in action than to hold itself repressed in delay. There is many a hero, prisoner of some disease which, while it does not kill the sense of energy, does chain the energy; there is many a hero of this sort, whose heroism of a passive but cheerful waiting is tremendously more difficult than that of the most exhausting and self-sacrificing service of action. But as Paul was able through Christ for the hardest action, so was he able for the most sunny and cheerful waiting while long imprisonment crowded back his exhaustless desire to range the world for Jesus' sake. There, in the worst and lowest quarter of Rome, where through the streets flowed such a vile and various populace as makes Tacitus call Rome the "sewer of the universe," Burrus, to whom the prisoner Paul had been consigned, allowed him, pending the hearing of his appeal to Cæsar, to live in his own hired apartment. "Any one," says Canon Farrar

"entering that mean and dingy room would have seen a Jew with bent body and furrowed countenance, and with every appearance of age, weakness, and disease, chained by the arm to a Roman soldier. But it is impossible that, had they deigned to look closer, they should not also have seen the gleam of genius and enthusiasm, the fire of inspiration, the serene light of exalted hope and dauntless courage upon those withered features."

Just at this time there was living an orator, a philosopher, a man of the widest wealth and reputation—Seneca by name—who a few years before had been exiled to the island of Corsica. But that exile broke down all his philosophy and all his manhood. There is no sadder page in history than that which tells of the whining and wallowing sycophancy of Seneca, if by any means the most loathsome flattery may oil the hinges of his imprisoning exile. He calls the Emperor Claudius a god, so that he may be let out. But no sooner is Claudius dead, than the vile epithets Seneca heaps

upon him hasten to show how cringing and unmanly Seneca was willing to become if, like a dog, he could only lick the hand of Claudius into opening his gates of exile.

Not so Paul. The dreary waiting of a long imprisonment can not change or crush him. As for the duty of active service, so for the discipline of harder and passive waiting is he furnished with an inner and conquering strength. He will see the blessed light playing even on these prison walls. Though he is bound, the word of God is not bound. He rejoices as he begins to discover how his bonds tend rather to the furtherance than the hindrance of the Gospel. Whether in life or in death he is only anxious that now, as always, Christ shall be magnified in his body. This Paul, whom no apparently impossible active duty could in the least discourage, neither can a wearing and weakening imprisonment in the least daunt. Competent for doing, he is competent for waiting too.

Notice again. There is nothing more annoying and strength-breaking than a *perpet-*

ual physical pain and hindrance. It is hard for the soul to make sweet music when it has only broken and jangling cords to strike. Close is the dependence of the spiritual upon the physical. It is difficult to be noble when you are thrust through with ignoble pangs. Strained and tortured nerves do not naturally minister to self-control. To be sick is not the best way to become saintly. There is religion in good health as there is swiftness in a smooth road; it is easier to be religious when damp, chill fogs of physical infirmity do not shut down upon the spirits.

Now, though we are very apt to forget it, when we think of that magnificently overcoming and crowned life, Paul was a confirmed invalid—he was a constantly sick man. He was pierced by the pain and hindered by the presence of a perpetual infirmity. Nor was it a sickness which grew better; his sickness stayed. Some physical hindering trouble, very real and very grave, is meant by that graphic phrase, "thorn in the flesh." And yet Paul is furnished with

an inner strength which baffles that also He does not succumb. He does not grow petulant. He does not complain. He does not find excuse in it for being less or doing less. Rather he compels this into a ministering toward spiritual vigor. This can not conquer him, he conquers it. He so conquers it that he is glad for it. This is what he says—Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

This Paul, before whom can be set no duty he will not dauntlessly attempt, whom no wearing imprisonment can break down, can be stopped neither in his victorious way by a piercing, thorny, physical malady, dragging at the spirits and weakening with a chronic invalidism. Amidst all he is king, and he is king over all.

And the words at the head of the chapter are the explanation of such grand, rare sovereignty. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Notice that such strong kingship comes not

* 2 Corinthians xii. 9.

through the self, but through Christ. It is not because of an inherent ability; it is because of an imparted ability. I can do all things—not in myself, but through Christ which strengtheneth me.

That is a most expressive symbol which has been so often found rudely engraven on the rings and seals which have been picked up in the catacombs at Rome, where the early Christians buried their dead, and where subsequently they sought refuge from persecution—from the burning stake, and the boiling oil, and the arena raging with wild and hungry beasts. The symbol is that of a lamb standing on the back of a fish. Interpret it, and it holds precisely the meaning of our Scripture. A common symbol for Christ in the catacombs is a fish. The reason is that the initial letters of the Greek word fish, Ἰχθύς, read as an acrostic, are the first letters of each of the names of Christ in Greek, *Ἰησοῦς χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ* — Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour. Thus by the symbol of a fish, as an ancient Father says, the name of Christ is

mystically designated. And a Lamb? Why, that is a common Scriptural designation for a believer. And the lamb standing on the fish? Now the interpretation is plain, that means the weak believer supported by Christ. And it was not because they were so strong and great in themselves, it was because they were so strong and great through the supporting Christ, that those early Christians were mightier than the flame of faggot, or the horrid grip of the starved lions, or the solid darkness of those subterranean catacombs, by the inward shining of the soul making them radiant with a light "which never shone on sea or land."

How, then, does Christ lift into such glorious empire, making men inwardly so strong? In many ways, of which I have not time to tell, save of two only.

Christ gives such inward power by His revelation to men of *A Particular Providence.* Dr. Guthrie relates a very wonderful story of his Scotch country parish. In a little Scotch cottage in that parish there lived a

decent widow, but rendered so helpless by paralysis that she could do nothing whatever for herself, nor ever come to church. Her daughter worked in a flax-mill hard by, and dutifully supported her mother, together with herself. There was much refuse thrown out from the mill; and in their poverty this refuse was seized upon as fuel. It was the daughter's habit, as she left the cottage each day, to heap up the refuse in the grate, and, kindling it, place her helpless mother in her chair directly before the fire, and there, as the fuel burned slowly, the helpless mother was kept comfortable until the hours of work were done and the daughter could return. One day Dr. Guthrie started to visit this physically helpless Christian. But on his way he met another parishioner, with whom he fell into earnest talk about some important matter, and stopping there, sitting on a bank of thyme, went talking and talking on. Then, he says, he felt that he must cut his conversation short, and go on to see that widow. But the conversation was important and

interesting, and he dismissed the thought. The impression again recurred, and again, and again, and was dismissed as often. But still recurring, he determined to obey the feeling, and as possessed by an uncontrollable impulse hastened to the cottage. As he entered he saw a sight of terror. This refuse fuel, which had been heaped by the careful daughter's hand several feet up the chimney, by the fire burning at its base had had its foundations eaten out, and had fallen forward on to the floor, surrounding the poor paralyzed woman by a ring of fire. She had cried out, but there was no one near to hear. And there she sat, with white face, chained by paralysis, unable to lift a hand, while the fire kept creeping nearer. Just as Dr. Guthrie entered it was about to seize her clothing, and wrap her helpless in its flame. "Ere it caught," he says, "I had time, and no more, to make one bound from the door to the hearth-stone, and seizing her, chair and all, in my arms, to pluck her from the jaws of a cruel fiery death."

Now, Dr. Guthrie says, what every Chris-

tian ought to say, that however men may talk about the laws of Nature and this invariable order of sequence and that, that narrow rescue was somehow because Christ had set His guarding providence around that helpless Christian. "Be it mine," he says, "to live and die in the belief of a present and presiding as well as personal God; in the faith which inspired my aged friend to thank Him for her wonderful deliverance, and the boy to explain his calm courage on the roaring deep in these simple but grand words: 'My Father is at the helm.'"*

And it is by His revelation of a Providence as attentive and particular as that seen in this instance that Christ makes Christians strong. They are not the sport of chance, the buffeted of pitiless blind forces, the helpless corn grinding in the mills of law. The very hairs of their heads are all numbered. What comes to them is permitted or appointed by the Pierced Hand. Christ does not always appoint relief and rescue. It may be that He shall

* "Out of Harness," pp. 309–11.

appoint the preaching to the skeptical scoffing crowd at Athens, or the shipwreck at the island Malta, or the long waiting as a prisoner in the gloomy room at Rome ; it may be that the Lord's surgery for the sake of spiritual health shall be by means of a thorn in the flesh lacerating and piercing ; the awful stake of martyrdom, or the wild beasts of the arena, or the dense blackness of the subterranean refuge of the catacombs may also be His permission or appointment ; but since these things and such as these are from *Him*, *not* from a horrid and cruel chance, not from the grindings of careless laws inexorable, but from Him who died for men, who loves men, who, seeing the end from the beginning, lovingly appoints the best for those He loves—then here is strength to do and here strength to endure. The loving rule of the Pierced Hand is best, and because I am under the loving rule of the Pierced Hand I can be strong.

Also, Christ gives such inward power to men *by His own Indwelling*. In the old Cov-

enant there was but one place where the Shekinah of God's special presence gleamed—in solitude, in loneliness, in the Holy of Holies, behind the awful forbidding curtain which only the High Priest might lift, and he but once a year. Men were apart from God, and God was apart from men.

In the new Covenant the veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Through Jesus Christ men may go toward God. Through Jesus Christ God comes toward men. O how condescendingly and how closely does He come! The Shekinah goes out upon the lonely mercy-seat, that it may set its shining in the heart of every believer. The tabernacle of God is with men. By the Holy Spirit the Godhead makes the believing heart its real residence. Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* Is your will weak? Christ will be in you to make it strong. Are your passions fiery? Christ will be in you to keep them cool and quiet by His pres-

* 1 Corinthians iii. 16.

ence. Are you anxious? Christ will be in you to whisper, "It is I, be not afraid." Does duty seem difficult? Remember the lamb upon the fish, the weak believer supported by Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour. O marvellous ministry of power this of Christ within a man; of Christ—not in Heaven only—not helping one from without, as a mother's strength takes hold externally of the little child—but of Christ helping one from within, Himself dwelling within, imparting vital and vitalizing strength. Ye are of God little children and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.* What wonder that Paul could not only *say* he was strong enough, but *be* veritably strong enough to do all things, when he was conscious of the strength within himself of the indwelling Christ. Thus, then, Christ gives such inward power by His own indwelling.

And now, in the way of suggestion.

First. *Our trouble is that we do not believe*

* 1 John iv. 4.

enough toward and expect enough from this whole strengthening side and ministry of our Religion. There was a backwoodsman in Arkansas who always slept upon the floor of his cabin, with only a block of wood for a pillow, covered with a coat or other garment. His neighbors urged him to send for a feather pillow. At last, moved by their entreaty, he did send a postage-stamp to a firm in St. Louis, asking them to send him a single feather. He put the single feather upon the block of wood and laid his head upon it, and instead of softness found only hardness, and at length, in the middle of the night, threw the feather away, declaring he would never believe in feather pillows. We are too much single-feather Christians. We do not get what we ought to get out of our religion. We think of it too much as a mere means of just escaping Hell and just getting into Heaven ; whereas there is a whole magazine of vigor in it for the living of a righteous life. There is power in it here and now through the strengthening Christ. Yes, there was, we

say, for the Apostle; but his was a peculiar case—there is not for me. And that is just our constant, miserable, skeptical heresy—Yes, for Paul, but not for me.

And yet this triumphant inward strength was for Annie Askew. She, a lady of rank and beauty, some time a member of the queen's court, was burned at Smithfield in 1546 for holding that in the communion, after the consecration, the bread continues only bread—which is the truth. And yet, on the night before she suffered she sang how bravely—

"Like as the armèd knight
Appointed to the field,
With this world will I fight,
And faith shall be my shield.

"Faith is that weapon strong
Which will not fail at need;
My foes therefore among
Therewith will I proceed.

"On Thee my care I cast,
For all their cruel spite,
I set not by their haste,
For Thou art my delight.

"I am not she that list
My anchor to let fall
For every drizzling mist;
My ship's substantial."*

And if for Paul and for Annie Askew, why not this inward strength for you and me? Why may not such promises as these be gripped even by my faith? Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will keep thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. They that strive with thee shall perish. For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying, Fear not, I will help thee.†

Second. *It is certain that through the strengthening Christ temptation and trouble need not overcome us.* Was it a strange experience which he told me? How he was the victim of the annoying and, as he knew, despicable habit of profanity; how by all the lower

* "Our Christian Classics," by Dr. James Hamilton, p. 46. .....

† Isaiah xli. 10, 13.

motives he sought to overcome it, because it was useless, because it was ungentlemanly, because it would injure his reputation, because—a nobler reason and a better—it damaged his fine sense of manhood. But how, again and again, though he girded himself against it by such considerations as these, the evil habit would assert itself. Then how, giving himself to Christ, he sought sincerely Christ's strengthening presence, and how the habit fell away from him, as the dried leaf, hanging on the branch the winter long, falls off by the pressure of the living leaf-bud swelling behind it in the genial airs of the spring sun. It was not a strange experience. It was one that is repeated. It is one that you and I can have repeated amid our temptations and our trials. There may be for us the strengthening Christ.

Well, it is the meaning and the victory of the Christian life to learn this lesson of the strengthening Christ. Do not let us be discouraged. I do not think it is a lesson

usually gotten suddenly. I doubt if Paul got it suddenly. Even Paul says, For I have *learned* in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content through the strengthening Christ. But let us set ourselves at the learning it; let us determine to know it. What a reach and growth of experience between the "Who art thou, Lord?" on the road to Damascus, and the "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," here at Rome! Paul grew in grace. Let us see to it that we grow in this grace of nobler faith in, and readier recognition of, and sweeter, deeper communion with, THE STRENGTHENING CHRIST.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRUIT.

AS we have often had occasion to notice, the thoughtful and loving Philippians had sent, by the hand of Epaphroditus, a gift to Paul, by means of which the imprisoned Apostle could pay for the "hired house" in which he dwelt at Rome, and supply, as well, his other simple wants, toward the filling of which his own chained hands were just now helpless.

Grateful as Paul was for the gift itself, his gratitude was far deeper for that spirit in the Philippians of which the gift was proof and symbol. In the eyes of the Apostle the gift was a most precious Fruit of Christian character and feeling. That the Philippians were Christians of such *Fruit-yielding* sort was his chief thankfulness. It is thus he writes to them abou it:

Not because I desire a gift; but I desire Fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Christian Fruit, then, is manifestly the central thought of this Scripture. Let our present chapter detain itself with this. From the light of this Scripture three separate gleams break upon this matter. There is light, first, concerning the *Fruit itself;* second, concerning the *Results of Fruit-bearing;* third, concerning the *Ability of Fruit-bearing.*

First, then, let us think together of the *Fruit itself*—Not because I desire a gift: but I desire Fruit.

Consider, *that Christians should bear Fruit is a main end of their being Christians.* Look into Nature and you will discover that fruitfulness is God's main end there. It is for

* Philippians iv. 17, 18, 19.

the fruit that seeds swell and burst, thrusting up their plumule and thrusting down their delicate white rootlets; it is for the fruit that trees rear the columns of their trunks and grasp the granite with their roots and hang out their leaves and push their fruit-buds into flower, and in woody covering like the cocoa-palm, or horny capsule like the oak, or prickly burr like the chestnut, develop and inclose and defend their fruit. Plants and trees serve, of course, other and subsidiary uses, but their fruit is their chief end. "The whole mass of the earth, from pole to pole and from center to circumference, has been weighed in the balance and exquisitely adjusted, to enable the snowdrop to hang its head, and allow the pollen of the shorter stamens to fall upon the longer stigma, and so produce its fruit. In order to produce fruitfulness the dimensions of the solar system, the axial rotation of the earth, and the changes of the seasons have all been adapted. For this the laws of the inorganic world have been made to agree in every point with those of the or-

ganic world. For this storm and calm, sunshine and cloud, dew and rain, day and night, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter succeed each other. For this all the processes of vegetable life are busy, from the sprouting germ of spring to the sere and yellow leaf of autumn. Fruitfulness is the focus into which all the various secondary purposes of Nature are concentrated, the end toward which all her energies are bent." *

Here is some poor weed or other growing by the wayside. It is trodden on; the soil about it is beaten together and hardened by the tramp of feet. It is a difficult place for the little plant. What does it do? Give up, wither away, die, say to itself, "No plant could bear fruit in such a place, it is not worth the trying"? Watch it. See what it does. It hurries on to fruit. It is bound to fulfil its destiny. You will notice that, as if it somehow knew its danger, it stops spending its strength in growing high, and begins to put all its energy into flower

* "The True Vine," by Hugh Macmillan, p. 131.

and fruit, though its sister plants, in more favorable conditions, wait to push themselves more loftily before they proceed to hang themselves about with fruitage. Anyway, the poor weed will reach its destiny of fruit, though it be in such bad plight for fruit-bearing, if by any means it can.

Here is a little Alpine plant, perched upon some mountain summit, where the tempests crash, where the snows encamp, where the warmest nights are chill with the breath of winter, where at best, out of the whole round year, the little plant can have, in the very noon and crisis of the summer, but a few short weeks to grow in—poor little plant, what will it do in such a hostile world? Give up, and say there is no chance in such a world for such a persecuted, storm-badgered, rock-surrounded, insignificant bit of an Alpine plant? Not so. It recognizes its destiny. It hastens toward its destiny. It turns every energy to fruit-bearing. It is careless about its leaves. It has no time or chance to have much care for them. But it hurries into large anc

brilliant flower, and urges the flower quickly on into the fruit. With an invincible tenacity it holds on to its duty of fruit-bearing. So everywhere you will find that Fruit is the main end toward which God looks in Nature.

And if you will turn from God's Scripture of Nature, which talks about trees and flowers, to God's Scripture of the Bible, which talks about Christians, you will discover that here, too, God's main end is Fruit. I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not Fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth Fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more Fruit. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear *much* Fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.* The proof and condition of discipleship is much Fruit-bearing.

Thus, as in Nature, so in Grace, the end toward which God looks is Fruit. As, missing that, the whole economy of Nature

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* John xv. 1, 2 8.

would be missed, so, missing that, the whole economy of Grace is missed.

Consider—*Of what sort the Fruit may be which Christians are to bear.* The Scripture is very full and clear in information here. But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.* Look carefully and you will see that this various Fruitage hangs in three distinct and precious clusters—the cluster of the Christian life in itself, the cluster of the Christian feeling toward others, the cluster of the principles which should guide the conduct of Christians. This is the cluster of the Christian life in itself—Love, joy, peace; in his own heart the Christian should be full of love to God, shining with joy, serene with peace. This is the cluster of the Christian feeling toward others—long-suffering, gentleness, goodness; long-suffering—the Christian should not be a powder-magazine, quick to explode at any little irritation: he should be patiently en-

* Galatians v. 22, 23.

during rather under injuries which others may inflict; gentleness — the Christian should be beautiful and bounteous with a loving, genial feeling toward others; goodness—the Christian should go forth toward others in a real and active beneficence: he should not ask so much how the self is getting on as how others are getting on; a servant came to the door of her mistress about three o'clock one afternoon, and said, "What is there for me to do now?" "Go up-stairs and rest," answered the lady; the girl looked hurt and went away; months afterward, when she came to know the lady better, she said, "I thought you were displeased with me on that day; nobody ever told me to rest before in all the years I have been at service"—that was the real Fruit of a Christian goodness, a thoughtful, active beneficence toward others hanging itself upon the life of this mistress of a home. This is the cluster of the principles which should guide the conduct of a Christian—faith, meekness, temperance; faith, that is faithfulness, trustworthiness, fidelity, hon-

esty; meekness, that is self-forgetting readiness in lowly service, as when Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, bent His greatness down even to the washing the disciples' feet; temperance, that is self-control, bitting and bridling and reining in passions and desires. Of such sort, then, are the Fruits which God expects in Christians. And the Apostle was so thankful for this thoughtful gift of the Philippians *because* it was substantial, definite evidence of their spiritual Fruitfulness. It gathered up into itself and illustrated love and self-sacrifice and beneficence and painstaking, meek service.

Consider—*that Christian Fruit must spring always out of the sacrifice of the lower self.* That is a wonderful fact in Nature, that fruit, toward which the plant so hastens, and upon the bearing of which it takes such tough, tenacious hold, is always the result of sacrifice on the plant's part. "The bud of a plant which, under the ordinary laws

of vegetation, would have elongated into a leafy branch, remains in the special case shortened, and develops finally, according to some regular law, blossom and fruit instead. Its further growth is thus stayed; it has attained the end of its existence; its life terminates with the ripe fruit which drops off to the ground. Whereas the bud which does not produce a flower or fruit grows into a branch, lives for years, may ultimately attain almost the dimensions of the main trunk itself, clothed with half the foliage of the tree. In producing blossom and fruit, therefore, a branch sacrifices itself, yields up its own individual vegetative life for the sake of another life that is to spring from it and to perpetuate the species."* It is a law most wonderful but most real in the vegetable kingdom. You see illustrations of it every season. How many fair and fragrant plants which we call annuals, after bursting into the beauty of their bloom, as soon as they have matured their seed, sink down and die, long

* "The True Vine," Hugh Macmillan, p. 138.

before the summer ceases. They have given their whole being to the production of the fruit. There is the American Aloe of the Mexican table-lands, which wrongly goes among us by the name of the century plant. It blossoms and pushes into fruit but seldom ; but when it does, on the entire plant you can see written the law of sacrifice for the sake of fruit-bearing. All its huge, thick, fleshy leaves shrink and come to almost nothing as the plant shoots up feet high its straight, strong stalk, and hangs upon it coronals of flowers and perfects its fruit. Fruit-bearing is the result of sacrifice.

Again, as in Nature, so in Grace. No man or woman can bear genuinely Christian Fruit who does not give up and give over into Christ's hands the old, bad, sinful self. The beginning condition of a Christian Fruit-bearing is the sacrifice of the self to Christ. The old life of self-pleasing becomes changed through sacrifice into a life of Christ-pleasing. The time past must suffice the Christian to have wrought the will of the flesh ; now he must live unto Him who died for him and rose again.

So much, then, as to Christian Fruit in itself. It is the main end, that which God peculiarly expects of Christians; its sort is what the Scriptures so plainly tell us are the Fruits of the Spirit; it springs from the sacrifice of the old life, that that old life may become changed into the new life which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Turn, now, to notice, in the second place, *some of the results of Christian Fruit-bearing.* Not because I desire a gift: but I desire Fruit *that may abound to your account.*

Even though Fruit does spring out of Sacrifice, a Christian can not bring it forth and not receive into his own bosom a return most precious. To his own account it will abound. It is only a child's story, but it tells a mighty truth for life:

A little boy once went home to his mother, and said—"Mother, sister and I went out into the garden, and we were calling about, and there was some boy mocking us."

"How do you mean, Johnny?" said his mother.

"Why," said the child, "I was calling out 'Ho! and this boy said 'Ho!' So I said to him, 'Who are

you?' and he answered, 'Who are you?' I said, 'Why don't you show yourself?' He said, 'Show yourself.' And I jumped over the ditch, and I went into the wood, and I could not find him, and I came back and said, 'If you don't come out, I'll strike you,' and he said, 'I'll strike you.'"

So his mother said: "Ah, Johnny, if you had said, 'I love you,' he would have said, 'I love you.' If you had said, 'Your voice is sweet,' he would have said, 'Your voice is sweet.' Whatever you said to him, he would have said back to you." And the mother said: "Now, Johnny, when you grow and get to be a man, whatever you will say to others they will by and by say back to you"; and his mother took him to that old text in the Scripture, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Ah, deep lesson, deep lesson! What abounds to our account is really the result and echo of the sort of Fruit we bear ourselves.

When we bear Christian Fruit there are two kinds of results abounding to our account. A result in this world. A result in the world to come.

A result in this world. There come back to you the bliss and peace of sacrifice, the inner joy of doing duty, the consciousness

of God's smile thrusting its sunshine into your deepest heart. For mark what the Apostle says concerning the result of this Fruit which the Philippians bore — The things that came from you, *an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.* That the Fruit we bear wafts precious perfume Godward must be solid reason for serene joy inward and for the self.

" For who gives, giving doth win back his gift ;
And knowledge by division grows to more ;
Who hides his Master's talent shall die poor,
And starve at last of his own thankless thrift.

" I did this for another ; and behold
My work hath blood in it ! but thine hath none ;
Done for thyself it dies in being done ;
To what thou buyest thou thyself art sold.

" Give thyself utterly away. Be lost.
Choose some one, something ; not thyself, thine own ;
Thou canst not perish, but, thrice greater grown,
Thy gain the greatest where thy loss was most.

" Thou in another shalt thyself need find.
The single globule lost in the wide sea,
Becomes an ocean. Each identity
Is greatest in the greatness of its kind.

' Who serves for gain, a slave by thankless pelf
Is paid ; who gives himself is priceless, free.
I give myself, a man, to God : lo, He
Renders me back a saint unto myself."

There is *such* abounding to one's own account from Christian Fruit-bearing even in this world.

But from Christian Fruit-bearing there shall be result also in the world to come ; there, too, shall it abound to one's account. The doctrine of works—we drop it altogether too much out of our Protestantism. The doctrine of justification by faith alone —we can not hold to it too firmly ; it is the article of a standing or a falling church ; it is the truth ; we are not justified by works. But while this is so, we should not forget or slight the fact that there is a grand shining place for works in the religion of the New Testament ; that evermore our works are the necessary proof of faith, and that while faith is the basis of our justification, works are as really the basis of our reward. The new birth, our entrance into the new life, our admission into Heaven, does

depend upon our faith; but having passed into the new life, the sort and largeness and nature of our reward does depend upon our works. There are diversities in glory. There shall be for some a nobler and more exalted Heaven than for others. There shall be upper seats and lower in the Heavenly Sanctuary. There shall be a warmer welcome for some than others. And the comparative meagreness or munificence of that future reward shall be according to our works, according to our Christian Fruitfulness. That man who, upon the only foundation which can be laid, Christ Jesus, builds only wood, hay, and stubble, shall be saved so as by fire, for by faith he is on Christ Jesus, but he shall get only the wood, hay, and stubble reward. That man who on that foundation builds, instead, gold, silver, precious stones—is not only saved by faith, but he also enters into the gold, silver, precious stone reward.* Ah, many that are first shall be last, and the last first.† Many a one of whom the world

* 1 Corinthians iii. 11, 15. † Matthew xix. 30.

thought much—too much, perhaps, for the man's best good—who really had a little vital spark of faith, but did not let that bit of better life develop into much Fruit-bearing, was one of your half-and-half Christians, was never much in love or joy or peace, was never in his feelings toward others very patient or gentle or kindly good, was more distinguished for a sharp bargain than for a real and self-forgetting faithfulness, was not much meek, nor ever greatly girded by a noble self-control, may get into Heaven—even the penitent thief was saved—but as to Fruit which shall abound to his account in that great world yonder, as to grand and high reward, how poor comparatively his destiny. But that old negro woman whom one of the Professors in the Fisk University in Nashville met one day, and who, coming up to him, and asking him if he did not recall her, and to his answer that he did not, answered, "I 'spect you doesn't. Well, down yonder, sah, when dis yere school was a baby, you know, down yonder in de guv'ment build-

ings, my Paulphemie went to your paid school; she got religion thar, and—and" (wiping slowly her eyes) "she done got de *choleray* and done died, nigh on ter fourteen year ago now, sah. Praise de Lord! she got religion, and she gone home ter glory!" And then the poor old thing, after placing her walking-stick so that she could safely lean on it and have her hands free, removed from her bosom a handkerchief, and with trembling fingers untied a knot in one corner; then she placed in the Professor's hand, counting them out one by one, six silver dollars. "For my Paulphemie's larnin', sah. I couldn't pay it sooner, sah; but sure 'nough, it's done laid like a stone right here all dese years," she said, putting her hand on her heart. "I prayed de Lord, an' I said, 'O! good Lord, don't lemme come home to glory till I done paid for Paulphemie's larnin'!' It's a pretty day, sah; I lives a right smart o' way yonder, an' my ole feet don't go fast, so good-evening" —this old negro woman who could not be prevailed upon to take the money back, and

concerning whom the Professor, walking homeward thoughtfully, asked himself, and rightly, how he could dare to pity a soul so noble—ah, I think, many such as she, who are last here, whom the world despises, shall be first There, when the reckoning comes to be made by the exactly just Christ between the Fruit and the account.

So, then, in the other world also, and surely, there shall be results from a Christian Fruit-bearing.

Turn to notice, in the third place and in the last, the *Ability of a Christian Fruit-bearing*. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* This ability of Fruit-bearing is not in ourselves. It is in Him. We receive it as we abide in Him. Even as Christ has told us, Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch can not bear Fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much

* Philippians iv. 19.

Fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

When the good and great Dr. James Alexander, of Princeton, lay dying, a friend who came in to comfort him, said, repeating the Scripture as it is too usually repeated—I know *in* Whom I have believed. From what seemed a state of unconsciousness, the old saint roused himself to tell his latest testimony. "No," he said, "I can not allow even a preposition between me and my Saviour," and, quoting the passage rightly, added—I know *Whom* I have believed.†

And this is a truth for life as well as for death—the Christian so close to Christ that nothing shall be allowed between. And in this close abiding, and nowhere else, can be found Ability of Christian Fruit-bearing. Oh, for us, conscious of such meagre and shrivelled Fruit upon the branches of our lives—here is the trouble, we are not so

* John xv. 4, 5, 6. † 2 Timothy i. 12.

close to Christ that we consciously abide in Him. We can not bear Fruit of ourselves, but in Him we can. And if we *will* but have it so, if we will but maintain ourselves in this sweet closeness, He whom the Apostle called "My God" shall supply all our need, shall give us grand Ability, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, unto Whom, our God and Father, be glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

CHAPTER XX

SAINTS IN CÆSAR'S HOUSEHOLD.

IT is thus the Apostle closes the Epistle to the Philippians :

> All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Of these Saints in Cæsar's household, and of the Grace which made them Saints and caused them to triumph, let us think together.

And yet we must not restrict Cæsar's household to our modern and simpler notions of a household. Cæsar's was a vast and complicated mass of human beings. Here, for instance, is a very meagre cata-

* Philippians iv. 22, 23.

logue of only a few of the officers in this household of Cæsar :—Teacher of the children, steward of the household, overseer of the tribute, chief of the door-keepers, superintendent of the foretasters—you see Cæsar was continually afraid of being poisoned, in order to be defended from poisoning, others must always taste his food before it touched his lips; if there were poison in the food it would show itself in these; and so a very important officer in Cæsar's household was the superintendent of these foretasters—chief of the golden vessels, superintendent of baths, a lapidary, one whose duty it was to hang the fragrant cedar or juniper upon the walls, a purveyor of corn, a keeper of the list of the horses, a keeper of dogs, an architect, a carrier of letters, a superintendent of the reservoirs which supplied the palaces with water, a surgeon, an oculist, a keeper of apartments, a teller of names—when Cæsar went abroad it was the duty of a special person to go with him to tell the names of those he met—a watchword teller—he was the one who received

from the Emperor, and told to others whose duty required them to know it, the watch-word for the night—the arranger of the people at the theatres, the superintendent of the choirs of boys and girls whose singing regaled Cæsar at his feasts, footmen—men whose duty it was to carry the royal chair or sedan when Cæsar chose to go out in this fashion—cooks, money-changers, menders of sandals, servants of the bed-chambers, superintendent of tables—I suppose he was the man who overlooked the arrangements of the various feasts—porters, ornamenters, men whose duty it was to anoint with oils after the baths, barbers, etc., etc., endlessly.* This is but a slight list. Besides, many of these officers were matched with those like them in the other sex whose duty it was to attend to the female occupants of the palace. And then, besides, these officers and others like them had beneath themselves hundreds and thousands of slaves, who thus also belonged to Cæsar's household. And still, besides, the

* Lightfoot on Philippians, p. 170.

élite corps of the whole army, the Prætorian guard, who had their vast camp at no great distance from the palace, and some of whom were always quartered in the palace and stood sentinel about the entrances, to which favorite corps was committed in a special manner Cæsar's safety—these also were in a sense members of his household. So Cæsar's household comprised an enormous mingling of the most various sorts of persons. It numbered thousands.

It is not needful, therefore, to suppose that these Saints of whom Paul speaks as belonging to Cæsar's household were necessarily in very close connection with Cæsar himself. We need not think of them as being great officers of State, in high rank and lifted place. The strong probability is, the most of them were not. You remember how Paul writes to the Corinthians of the usual place in life of the early Christians. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of

the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

And yet we should think wrongly, if we thought that none of these Saints in Cæsar's household were in lifted place. While not many noble were called, some who were noble were. It is not at all improbable that some of that long list of persons to whom Paul sent special salutation when he came to the close of the Epistle to the Romans were of these Saints in Cæsar's household. They were Christians before Paul himself had come to Rome. And comparing the names mentioned in that last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans with the inscriptions which have been discovered, and with the histories of the time which have come down to us, we find various names which suggest,

* 1 Corinthians i. 26–29.

at least, the very strong probability that the Christians bearing them stood in more real and close relation with Cæsar, and were in higher and more unusual posts. Ampliatus is such a name, and Urbanus, and Stachys, and Apelles, and Philologus, and Julia, and Nereus. The way in which such names as these have been found upon inscriptions suggests the strong likelihood that they or some of their relatives stood more within the inner circle of Cæsar's Court.*

You see here the value of the lists of names which sometimes occur in the Scripture, which perhaps we have too hastily thought were useless. Here is only another illustration of the truth that *all* Scripture—even a dry catalogue of names—is profitable.

So this is the fact at which we get. While Paul was held here a prisoner at Rome there were Saints in Cæsar's household, most of them but on the household's rim, standing in the petty offices or among the throng of oppressed and helpless slaves,

* Lightfoot on Philippians, pp. 171–5.

but some of them probably more lifted and standing in greater personal nearness to the man whose nod or wink even meant to all of them life or death.

And now, though we know so little of them, so immensely less than we would like to know, and though they are separated from us by so many centuries, these Saints in Cæsar's household may be the teachers to us of some most valuable lessons.

The Uniting Power of Christ's Gospel is one lesson. All the Saints salute you, writes Paul, chiefly they of Cæsar's household. *All* the Saints—whether they were highest or whether they were lowest, whether they were freedmen or whether they were slaves, whether they were richest or whether they were poorest, all were full of a saluting love for their Brethren at Philippi.

This was a most marvellous fact for these times, that people of such various sorts and conditions should have the slightest regard, not to say love, for each other. It was a fact absolutely unique. Dr. Maclaren, of

Manchester, England, has told so truly the hard and jagged separations between men at that time and the wonderful unifying influence of the Gospel, that I can not do better than quote his words: "The world then was like some great field of cooled lava on the slopes of a volcano, all broken up by a labyrinth of clefts and cracks, at the bottom of which one can see the flicker of sulphurous flame. Great gulfs of national hatred, of fierce enmities of race, language, and religion; wide separations of social condition, far profounder than anything of the sort which we know, split mankind into fragments. On the one side was the freeman, on the other the slave; on the one side the Gentile, on the other the Jew; on the one side the insolence and hard-handedness of Roman rule, on the other the impotent and, therefore, envenomed hatred of conquered peoples. And all this fabric, full of active repulsions and disintegrating forces, was bound together into an artificial and unreal unity by the iron clamp of Rome's power, holding up the bulging walls that were

ready to fall—the unity of the slave-gang manacled together for easier driving. Into this hideous condition of things the Gospel comes, and silently flings its clasping tendrils over the wide gaps, and binds the crumbling structure of human society with a new bond, real and living."* Bound by this new and vital bond the highest Saint in Cæsar's household was at one with the lowest, and both and all were one with the Saints at Philippi, even though they may have never seen or known each other.

The Gospel united all. Christ's Saints were one. There was an inner, deeper, clasping union underrunning all the more surface divisions of station in life, or wealth or poverty, or belonging to this city or race or that.

The lesson for us who are now Christians is this, that Christ's Gospel has not changed. Neither to-day is the saintly spirit one toward division and disunion, but one toward union. Remember a test which John has given us by which we may

* "Week-day Evening Addresses," p. 126.

try ourselves as to whether we are genuinely Christian or not :—We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* And this loving does not mean merely tolerating the brethren, but actually loving them.

We need this saintly unity in our churches. Too often are they split up into little cliques and miserable sets. Too often are the social distinctions of the outside world imported into the sacred brotherhood and sisterhood, fracturing unity. Too often do those, for years members of the same church and drinking from the same communion cup, not know each other, and, what is worse, not care to know each other. I am ashamed sometimes when I am told that the tie among secular societies is closer than the tie between Christians, between members of the same church. But still you can not change the Gospel. Still a main test of being a Christian is that you *love* the Brethren, not merely that you are on the

* 1 John iii. 14.

most coldly distant speaking terms with them. Still and for to-day the genuinely Saintly spirit is this which Paul expresses—*All* the Saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household.

We need this saintly spirit of a real sweet unity in our business. Greedy oppressions of corporations, and there are such oppressions, mutterings of communism; useless and prodigal strikes, where the workingman every time loses more than he can possibly ever gain; all this discontented and strained relation between employer and employé—the radical cure for them is Christ's Gospel, the at-the-root remedy is this recognition of the unity and brotherhood of men in Jesus Christ. I know a village where there are rich capitalists and thousands of employés. If only political economists would see there how the problem of labor and capital has been at least measurably solved. "The best boss in the world," one of the laborers said to me walking with him along the street. I do not think you could get up a strike in that village. Why? These cap-

italists in the highest, broadest, noblest sense are Saints. They are full of this saintly spirit of unity with their employés. So they are just. So they see to it that the houses in which their employés live are decent and well drained. They think more of the men than they do of money ; and yet, in the compensations of Providence, they get the money, and miss much trouble in getting it through their high sympathizing Sainthood. Christ's Gospel is the best cure for labor troubles. When will men learn it? When will men learn this saluting each other in the unity of brotherhood? Say, my brother, that poor girl whom you employ in your store or manufactory—have you seen that, as far as possible, she has pure air to breathe, and in the bitter weather a warm place to work in? Sainthood will do it. All the Saints salute you. The spirit of Sainthood is that of a tender and loving Unity.

The fact that men and women can be Saints in most difficult places is another lesson we

should learn at the hands of these Saints in Cæsar's household. I am sure you could not imagine a place in which it would be harder to be a Saint than the household of Cæsar. The Cæsar of this time was Nero—I suppose, without exception, the worst of men. Coming to the Purple at seventeen as he grew in age he grew into titanic vice He slew Britannicus, the son of Claudius, the Emperor before him, and who was the rightful heir. His wife Octavia, whose pure character shines out like a star amid the midnight blackness of that awful time, he discarded for the worst women; and finally, because Octavia's life stood in the way of his outrageous lusts, on a trumped up charge of adultery, of which she was as innocent as the sunlight, he slew her also. About two years before the arrival of Paul at Rome, Nero had committed the crime of matricide. Instigated by the unholy Poppæa, whom he had married twelve days after the death of the pure Octavia, and who looked upon Nero's mother, Agrippina, as a hindrance in her own way, Nero had a

decoy ship built, so joined by bolts that being suddenly withdrawn the ship would go to pieces, and, with all fawning and hypocritical affection, enticing his own mother aboard at night, meant to sink her thus in the waters of the Lucrine Lake. And when this foulest of stratagems failed, the monster ordered her dispatched in her own house in her own bed by the blows of soldiers. Nero was a man "who expended more ingenuity in contriving new modes of dishonoring humanity than most Christians have in serving it, and who earned the reputation of introducing into history, as facts, crimes so enormous and combinations of wickedness so revolting that but for him they would have been held too fabulous for the wildest fancy." When the boy Britannicus, the son of Claudius, and who rightfully should have worn the Purple in Nero's stead, was borne out from the feast room rigid with the deadly poison which had just been given him in his food by Nero's order, Nero, turning lazily on his couch, remarked that that death rigor was but a fit of epi-

lepsy, to which Britannicus was subject. Nero built a golden house, which is thus described: "Its colonnades were each a mile long. In its vestibule stood a colossal statue of the Emperor one hundred and twenty feet high. The other dimensions of the palace were on the same scale. It embraced fields and gardens, meadows and forests, and even a lake. The walls and saloons were overlaid with gold, and adorned with precious stones and mother-of-pearl, or with glass mirrors which reflected to the beholder his entire figure. Smaller apartments had walls which were completely covered with pearls. The banqueting-rooms were decorated with special magnificence, and the baths offered the rarest luxury. The banqueting-rooms had gilded, carved, and painted ceilings, which were changed to suit the various courses of the meal, and so constructed that flowers and perfumes could be scattered upon the guests. Water from the sea, as well as sulphurated water from the springs of the Tiber, was conducted to baths through magnificent conduits, and

flowed from gold and silver faucets into basins of variegated marble, so that it looked now red, now green, now white. 'Now I am lodged as a man should be,' said Nero, when he took possession of the palace." * But when he would divert suspicion from himself for the starting of that vast fire whose ravages made room for his golden house, Nero imputed the fire to his innocent Christian subjects, and wrapping them up in beasts' skins set dogs to torture them, and smearing them with pitch and setting fire to them turned them into torches with which to drive away the darkness of the night. And the money which reared those splendid walls was simply stolen from the wide empire by the extortion of an illimitable power. When Poppæa, the infamous wife of Nero, whom also he slew finally with a brutal kick, went on a journey, she took with her five hundred asses in order that from their milk cosmetic baths might be prepared for her, and every one of these

* Ulhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," p. 111.

animals was shod with gold and silver. When Nero amused himself with fishing he used nets threaded with gold.*

Such lawlessness and luxury in the palace were the quick causes of the utmost possible imitations of them among those outside the palace. Indeed, the world was rotting. There were no laws. There was no safety. There was no purity. I may not write the words which would give slight hint, even of the inconceivable and infernal putrescence which touched and damaged everything. And over all sat this crowned criminal with the sceptre of an absolute and unquestioned power in his hands.

Think now of the relation in which slaves stood to Nero himself, and to the throngs of Roman noblemen who made him their model. Was his master feasting—the slave fasting and speechless must stand whole nights behind his chair or couch, alert at his least wish, wiping off his drunken drivel or his vile vomit. Did the slave sneeze, did he cough, did he whisper, did weariness

* Ulhorn, p. 115.

overcome him, did he in any wise disturb his master's peace or forget his duty in the slightest, did the trembling hand of some slave-girl twist wrongly some ringlet as she dressed her mistress' hair — a word would send them to the scourging till the blood came, or fling them into the ponds to fatten fishes, or hang them up in crucifixion. Nor were slaves alone in such awful plight. Freedmen were as well, and men who stood in the highest offices of State. The assassin's stroke, the poison, illegal imprisonment, every most horrid instrument of utterly selfish and uncaged power was in that power's swift and facile grasp.

And, passing by the masters—what must have been the daily companionships of such a place and time, where lust was crowned, and cruelty was dominant, and the path of such safety as could be had was that of falsity and intrigue, and all the air was hostile with heathen hatreds? In one of the lower rooms, amid the ruins of Cæsar's palace, was found some years since a ribald scratching on the plaster of the wall—a

man with an ass's head was represented as stretched upon a cross, and near by was the rude figure of one kneeling in worship, and underneath was written in Greek characters the heathen sneer at some humble Christian, "Alexamenos adores his god."

And yet there were Saints even in Cæsar's household. Perhaps, as I have already suggested, the names of some of them are told us in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Perhaps Urbanus, the helper in Christ, was one of them. Perhaps Staychs, the beloved, was another. Perhaps Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labored in the Lord, were others. But whether their names have come down to us or not, there were Saints even in Cæsar's household. Even there they witnessed a good confession. Amid even such foulness they kept a Christly purity. Menaced even by such risks they held fast their profession. Immersed even in such companionships they walked worthy of the vocation whereunto they were called.

What proof here that Sainthood may be

mightier than plight or place, that it may be kinglier than circumstance, that, like the pine upon the mountain-ledge, it need not despair, but finding root-grasp in the rocks even, may grow strong and flourish.

O Christian business man—complaining that it is hard to do business and be Christian, excusing your questionable ways of trade because others walk in them and competition is fierce and you must therefore, bending the stiffness of your integrity at this supposed necessity and that, remaining satisfied with being as good as and no better than your neighbors on the street, remember that there were high white Saints in Cæsar's household, and that you are in the south land, verdurous with springs of water, compared with them.

O Christian wife of a husband who is not Christian, who rears no family altar for which you long, you who find no genuine mating of religious help and feeling, you whom difficulty waits on constantly as you seek to serve your Christ and to win your husband to serve Him with you—it is hard,

I know; your heart faints often and your faith fails and you are weary and anxious with your unshared religious responsibility for your family; but remember that there were the triumphs of Sainthood in Cæsar's household, and that your place is a smooth Paradise compared with that in which they steadily struggled on.

O young man, lonely and heart-sick as I know you often are in the great city, longing for the home faces and the home fireside, into whose ears the temptations of the city will keep singing their siren songs and before whose feet they will keep spreading their glittering snares; though perplexed, be not despairing; Sainthood could keep chastely pure even in Cæsar's household; certainly it can hold itself unsmutched from the defilements amidst which you must walk with eye uplifted and with purpose fixed upon the right.

O any one or all of us, who are calling our places hard and our troubles peculiar and overmastering, and the providences which touch us harsh and hindering, and

our circumstances like Arctic zones rather than June airs, and who are disheartened, and perhaps murmuring and slipping back, let us accept rebuke from the Saints in Cæsar's household, and be sure there can be no excuse for us in such a time and land as that in which we live, if we weakly or slothfully or despondingly refuse to endure hardness as good soldiers.

This is the lesson which, like an invigorating breath from Heaven, ought to sweep upon us across the centuries from these Saints in Cæsar's household—Sainthood is something sturdy.

The Vitality of Sainthood, what can make it conquering—is another lesson we may learn from the concluding Apostolic benediction.

For what is it to be a Saint? Is it to be a perfect person, is it to be one who has attained sinlessness, one who has already won the crown of a complete self-conquest for righteousness? That is to be a Saint yonder. The Scripture does not tell of any such Saints in this lower world. What is

it, then, to be a Saint in this lower world? It is to be a person in the process of such self-conquest for righteousness, and one in such process because a person consecrated. That is the New Testament meaning of Saint, a separated, consecrated one. And separated to Whom, consecrated to Whom? Why, of course, to Jesus Christ. Separated to Christ, consecrated to Christ—that it is to be a Saint.

And what then? Why, the Apostle tells us what then in the concluding verse and benediction of this Epistle. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Consecrated to Jesus Christ, and so a Saint, you get something from Jesus Christ enabling you for Sainthood. You get Grace from Him. And that Grace means everything you need—vigor, persistence, patience, faith, love, hope; what armory of weapons and furniture of ability to fight the fight and endure the trials and win the victories of Sainthood you require. The Saints in Cæsar's household were those consecrated to Christ, and therefore filled

with the Grace of Christ, and so were able to be Saints even in Cæsar's household. And there is no vitality and victory of Sainthood anywhere save in this consecration of the self to Jesus Christ, and this reception into the self of the Grace of Jesus Christ. But in these there is such vitality and victory. Closeness to Christ, then, daily consecration to Him and daily reception of His Grace, is the secret of a triumphing Sainthood. Not activity the most stringent, not prayers the most powerful, not sermons the most searching, not sacraments the most sacred, not creeds the most orthodox—nothing can take the place of *Closeness to Christ.* The real vigor of Sainthood is the branch abiding in the vine. Without Christ we can do nothing.

O failing Saints, come back to the source and spring of vigor—renewed devotement of the self to Christ, renewed reception of His Grace. And be you sure that, just as no flower in the spring-time can turn itself sunward and not find itself strengthened and made beautiful by the sunshine wait-

ing for it, so no soul can actually and thoroughly turn itself toward Christ and not receive the power and the beauty of the Grace of Christ. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect—held in steady and pure intent—toward Him.*

* 2 Chronicles xvi. 9.

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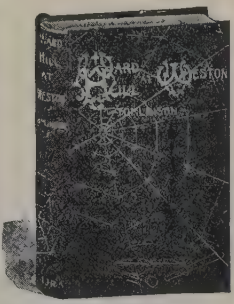

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